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Israel uses housing growth to cement grip on Jerusalem

By Barton Gellman
OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—From a high hill over East Jerusalem's Mar Ilyas monastery, where rusting barbed wire and broken bunkers mark an old Jordanian army post, Palestinian geographer Khalil Tufakji swept his arm from north to south.

At the top of the arc sprawled the Arab village of Umm Tuba, looking more or less as it did when Israel annexed it to Jerusalem 30 years ago: dirt and crumbling asphalt roads and scattered two-story homes.

A mile or so away stood the pine-covered hill where Israel's gov-

Jordanians prepare for a legal battle over properties in Israel

By Raed Al Abed

AS IF Jordanian-Israeli relations were not strained enough, a new crisis is casting its shadow on bilateral ties this time over the fate of properties owned by Jordanians in Israel. These properties are ruled by the so-called Israeli "absentee's property law" of 1950.

This law was imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities two years after the declaration of the Jewish state in Palestine in 1948. The law gives Israel the right to seize properties belonging to those who fled the fighting and others who stayed on their land. Also the law gives Israel the right to use lands owned by Palestinians who were forced to abandon their properties and which later became under the control of the so-called "absentee's

property guard".

The "absentee's property guard" transferred ownership of much of this land to the "Israeli Development Corp." created by the Israeli Knesset at that time.

Immediately after the signing of the peace treaty in October 1994, the Jordanian government demanded that Israel return all properties owned by its citizens of Palestinian origin and others in Israel. But Israel dodged the issue and suggested that it be postponed. Last month it announced that it will continue to deal with "Jordanian lands and houses in Israel in accordance to the absentee's property law of 1950."

The Jordanian government, on the other hand, is determined not to give in on the issue.

Till now "we have no official response from the Israeli government," Dr

Marwan Muasher, Minister of Information told *The Star*, Wednesday. "We are seeking to negotiate the issue with the Israeli side through our committee."

The Jordanian government also based its claims on Article 26 of the peace treaty which states that within three months of the ratification of the treaty "the parties [Jordan and Israel] undertake to enact any legislation necessary to implement the treaty, and terminate any international commitments and repeal any legislation that is inconsistent with the treaty."

The Israeli government claimed that the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty "allows Israel to continue implementing its laws regarding properties not owned by Jews." The Israeli government also claims that the Jordanian-Israeli peace

treaty does not rule on the fate of lands and houses in Israel which are owned by Jordanians.

Jordan maintains that the Israeli Law of 1950 is a clear violation of article 26 of the peace treaty. Jordan says that Israel recognizes that it does not own those properties as long as they are considered as "absentee's property."

Regarding article 26 of the treaty, "the Israeli continuation to implement the law [of 1950] is a clear violation to the peace treaty signed between the two sides," Dr Nafe' Al Hassan told *The Star*, Al Hassan, who is an expert in international law and in refugee affairs, asked the Jordanian government to take up the fight on two levels, politically and legally.

Early in 1995, Jordan presented an official letter to the Israeli Foreign Ministry stating that Israel abandons properties under the "absentee's property law" and return it to its lawful owners.

The government asked those Jordanians who own property in Israel to go there and assign lawyers to file cases in Israeli courts to redeem their legitimate properties.

In 1995, the government in Jordan formed a special ministerial follow-up committee. It is headed by the Minister of Finance with the membership of Badri Al Mulqi, former director of the Land and Survey Dept., Ibrahim Mesmar, current director of the said department, Kamel Nassrawi, and former head of the documentation bureau of the department. The committee also has the two secretary generals of the ministries of justice and interior.

According to the text of the Israeli law no 5755 of 1950 known as "absentee's," article One/B of the law identifies the absentee as "any person who legally owns property in Israel, which includes citizens of Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq,

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mag



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BEIRUT

NEW GENERATION NEW DREAMS

Clinton criticizes Israel, but promises Arafat little Netanyahu orders closures of four Palestinian offices in Jerusalem before meeting President Mubarak

WASHINGTON—One day after President Yasser Arafat met US President Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shut down four Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem.

During his meeting with Arafat, Monday, the US president criticized Israel's decision to build additional housing for Jews in East Jerusalem. Clinton and other US officials elevated the status of Palestinian leader Arafat by receiving him with generous doses of time, praise and commitment.

Arafat, who under US law is still the head of a terrorist organization and can be received only with a presidential waiver, was treated almost like a friendly head of state. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns hailed him as "a man who has made a fundamental commitment to peace."

"I appreciate his coming to see me," Clinton said of the formerly reviled Arafat, who until a few years ago could never have dreamed of hearing a US president say such a thing.

After meeting with Arafat for an hour and 20 minutes, including 20 minutes alone, Clinton said the decision last month by Israel to construct 6500 housing units for Jews between mostly Arab communities in East Jerusalem "builds mistrust. And I wish that it had not been made."

Clinton's comments were similar to criticism of the Israeli decision made last week by Burns, but criticism of Israel takes on added resonance when it comes from the president. The reception accorded to Arafat was designed both to reinforce the criticism of Israel and to enhance the status of a leader whom the administration has come to regard as indispensable to the peace process.

Arafat told CNN he believed Clinton would discuss the matter with Prime Minister Netanyahu. He said he will try, because the decision has been taken by Netanyahu himself," Arafat said.

He added that he hoped Washington would play a role in halting construction of the new housing, while his top negotiator, Nabil Shaath, warned that failure to reverse



A warm reception, but little came out of the meeting

the plans could spark fresh unrest and violence. In the CNN interview, Arafat likened Jerusalem to Rome, which is at once the capital of the Vatican and Italy. "Where there is a will, there is a way," he said.

In his public remarks Clinton gave no indication of what, if anything, he might do to try to influence the Israelis to change their decision on the matter, which has sparked strong protests by Palestinians. Arafat "was clearly very concerned and emotional on the subject" of the housing planned in Jabal Abu Ghneim, White House spokesman Michael McCurry said. "And the president certainly understood the basis of that emotion, and you heard the president himself express his concern about steps that do not work to build confidence between the parties in the peace process."

The US position is that the future of Jerusalem is one of the "final status" issues that Israel has agreed to negotiate with the Palestinians and that neither side should take unilateral steps that prejudice the negotiations. But neither Clinton nor any other official gave any indication Monday that the administration would take specific steps to head off the controversial housing development.

Asked if Arafat had warned that there would be bloodshed if Israel proceeds with construction, McCurry replied that the Palestinian leader "has been very careful about that, and his restraint is admirable."

This is the sixth time Arafat has met Clinton, McCurry said, but it is the first time he has come to Washington as a leader in his own right, rather than as a participant in a multi-national event.

After seeing Clinton, Arafat spent more than four hours with Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, parts of which were joined by Treasury Secretary Robert E. Rubin and by J. Brian Atwood, administrator of the US Agency for International Development.

As a result of those talks, Burns said, the United States and Arafat's Palestinian Authority will form a high-level joint committee to coordinate policy on economic and political issues.

The United States has similar bilateral committees with Russia, Egypt and South Africa. Putting the Palestinian Authority in such company gives Arafat a political bonus that enhances his position among a Palestinian populace that has shown signs of growing restive about Arafat's leadership.

Albright and Arafat will co-chair this committee. The purpose, Burns said, will be to "make sure that each of us is meeting our commitments, economic and political and otherwise, to each other."

News Analysis

ernment has announced plans to raise a modern, high-rise neighborhood for 30,000 Jews—with shopping centers, landscaped parks, tourist hotels and a public swimming pool.

If built as intended, the new neighborhood of Har Homa would complete a stunning transformation in the historically Arab portion of the holy city. The Jewish population of East Jerusalem, which stood at zero when Israel captured it in the 1967 Middle East War and reached parity with the Arabs in the 1990s, would become the decisive majority there.

"This is reality," Tufakji said. "Reality is geography. Reality is demography."

Equally important to Israeli planners, Har Homa would come close to completing the encirclement of East Jerusalem's Arab neighborhoods, foreclosing their evolution as capital of a hoped-for Palestinian state. It would join a terraced stone fortress of Jewish settlement, linked by roads and services, winding clockwise from Gilo in the city's south to Ramot in the northwest.

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German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel ended a 24-hour visit to Jordan, Wednesday. He was received by His Majesty King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan. During a press conference he said that any building of settlements in the Occupied Territories is an obstacle to the peace process. He said that this was not only a German view but a European one. He added that the Middle East had no alternative to peace and in this respect paid tribute to Jordan's key role in the region. At the head of a top level German business delegation, Mr Kinkel met with Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti where they discussed issues of mutual economic cooperation.

Sudan presents picture of 'enlightened' fundamentalism

By Nicholas Goldberg

KHARTOUM—In the deserted stairwell of a dilapidated office building, a boy and a girl are talking quietly, holding hands, out of sight of the lunchtime masses.

Although the behavior police and the neighborhood surveillance committees are armed to whom in this dusty city on the Nile, the two lovers are cautious but unworried. Out on the street below, a woman walks quickly from her office to her car with her head uncovered, despite rules requiring veils in public places.

"They tell me to wear it, and if I don't, they can bring me to the police station for

immodesty," said the woman. Alya Kassar, a university instructor in her mid-30s. "But I think my religion is my own business, and that it should be up to me how I dress."

Sudan, the largest country in Africa and one of the poorest, has been in the midst of an Islamic "revolution" since 1989, when a small religious party seized control in a bloodless coup, hoping to transform its society. Like Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Iran, there are now strict rules and laws here banning alcohol, adultery and unsupervised mixing between the sexes among other things—as well as the traditional Islamic punishments that include amputations, stoning, flogging and death.



Turabi: A kinder, gentler Islam

In a country where one's faith used to be a relatively private matter, religious instruction is now required at virtually all schools, and the behavior

police keep guard over the morality of citizens.

Yet somehow, even after eight years, this enormous country of 30 million people remains different from the other Islamic nations of the Middle East. For one thing, the people of Sudan have simply refused to accept many of the religious strictures. The amputations and stonings called for in the penal code, for instance, are rarely carried out—probably because the Sudanese were so publicly horrified in the 1980s when they were first imposed. Women—admittedly a small number of them—flout

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Weather Outlook

A cold front will affect the Kingdom over the weekend. The weather will be cloudy to partly cloudy on Thursday, Friday and Saturday with temperatures averaging 8 to 11 degrees during the day and around 1 to 0 at night. Rain, accompanied by thunder storms at times, is expected in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom. In Aqaba the weather will be partly cloudy to sunny and the sea calm. Temperatures will be below their seasonal average at about 18 degrees.

World Report

The Al Hussein Social Institution

Orphans' cries get a hearing at last

By Manal Omar

Special to The Star

"AHLAN WA SAHLAN," shout the group of kids no older than six years old the moment you open the door in one of the rooms at the Al Hussein Social Institution. The chorus of orphans run immediately, almost stumbling over each other as they try to hug you. Each orphan's eye tells a different story, but the reflection calling for affection is the same.

No matter who you are, a visit to the Al Hussein Social Institution, which is home to 175 orphans, will leave a deep and profound impact. The hard living conditions coupled with the precious children's eagerness for affection will leave tears in the eyes. A visit to the center will haunt the heart of hearts, and motivate the generous for action.

The conditions of Al Hussein Social Institution were brought under the spotlight after a surprise visit by Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor. The visit was inspired after the incident with the child Noha, who was repeatedly denied treatment by three different hospitals after suffering from intense renal pains. Only four years old, the child was being treated at Al Basheer hospital but to no avail, until she was transferred to the Italian Hospital. The diagnosis showed that Noha was suffering from kidney problems, and the treatment in Al Basheer had not been productive. It was suggested that Noha be transferred to the University Hospital, where her nanny was informed the child could not be treated until several conditions were met. Fortunately for Noha, word was reached to HM King Hussein and full treatment was covered by the Royal Court.

Nonetheless, the question of the health care and lifestyle of orphans was raised to the public. The visit to Noha's home by Their Majesties was completely unplanned. The sight of the orphans left a deep effect on the King, to the point that he found himself troubled to sleep. From the six orphanages in Amman, and the 17 in Jordan, the Al Hussein Social Institution established in 1953, is the only one that bears the

King's name. The next morning crucial changes were announced for the future of the Institution. The King offered his own palace as the new building and the current Director was transferred to a different ministry.

Despite the changes, the question of the conditions of the Al Hussein Social Institution still lurk in people's mind. "Our hands are tied. We can only work with the resources we have," explains Mrs. Rania Khasawneh, the newly-appointed director as of 1 March. The Institution is home to boys from newborn to six years old, and females range from newborn to 12 years old. The ratio of nanny to child is unbalanced, with the Institution having only 44 employees divided between three separate shifts. In the evenings, a maximum of 10 nannies are with 175 children. As a result, the question of proper treatment is inevitably raised. Most importantly is the fact that the vast majority of employees are unqualified to work in such a field, the average holding only a high school diploma. The Institution only has one university graduate, and four two year college graduates in the field of social work.

As for the actual physical conditions of the orphanage, they are not as harsh as many have portrayed. The orphans are placed in different sectors, and for the past eight years the Institute has implemented a family system. The children are placed in a home with other children from different age groups who represent their siblings. They have one nanny who becomes their mother figure. "We live exactly as a family does. It's like I am a widow with all my kids," explains Maysoon Zeidan, the only permanent nanny at the Institution.

There are three to four different homes, and there is also a special area dedicated to helping the students with their education after they return from elementary school. The homes can easily be considered to be one of the better homes in East Amman and in other disadvantaged areas in Jordan. Equipment such as a heating system, a full kitchen, and television sets make the home environment for the orphans comfortable and complete.



HM King Hussein with children from the Al Hussein Social Institution

The King emphasized on a number of occasions that the Ministry of Social Welfare was not to blame, nor was the administration of the Institution. "The building is great and our employees are dedicated. The reason for any poor conditions is merely money. We do not have a large budget," reaffirms Khalil Al Bana, the Director of Public Relations at the Ministry of Social Development. The King's visit brought attention to the Institution, and along with it brought much criticism. Therefore, the finger of blame was immediately pointed at the institution. With such a limited budget there is little that can be accomplished. At the same time, through all the criticism that the Institution has received, very little action from the community itself to reverse the situation has been implemented. Due to its location in East Amman, Al Hussein Social Center is often neglected from public donations and contributions. The Institutions in West Amman receive a

plethora of donations, and during parts of the year even have an excess amount of meat.

Perhaps one of the main concern for the orphans is receiving the proper attention. No matter where you walk the little children flock to you, screaming "mama, mama." A simple hug brings a broad smile on their face. Even the little infants instantly respond to you, and the older infants reach out their tiny little hands desperately searching for affectionate touch. It is easy to forget about this part of the community, especially when we refuse to visit and witness these children for ourselves. It is even easier to point fingers and blame their discomfort on the administration. However, the orphans of Jordan's community as a whole is motivated to take action can the crucial changes in our social centers be accomplished.

Israel uses housing growth to cement grip on Jerusalem

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The last gap in the circle, to the east, would be closed by the aptly named Eastern Gate project, now in advanced stages of planning by Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon.

Many outsiders, even those who regard themselves as well informed, still conceive Jerusalem in the two halves that defined it until 1967: a Jewish west and an Arab east, even if Israel holds formal sway over both. The realities Tufakji spoke of are otherwise.

Israel's government, under the Labor and Likud parties alike, has poured more than 170,000 Jewish residents into the city's eastern side in the past 30 years, nearly all of them on land expropriated from private Arab owners. Meanwhile, an intricate web of legal and bureaucratic impediments, according to government docu-

ments and former municipal planners, has stifled Arab growth.

Government data show that Israel has expropriated for "public purposes" more than one-third of all the real estate in East Jerusalem from its predominantly Arab owners. Jerusalem's municipal planning board, on which no Arab has ever held a seat, assigned most of the land to new housing—and all of the housing to Israeli Jews.

Of the 38,500 apartments built on expropriated land in East Jerusalem since 1968, none has been built for Arabs. There are now nearly twice as many Jewish apartments in East Jerusalem as Arab ones.

None of that is new. But Har Homa, which Arabs call Jabal Abu Ghneim, is Israel's first major move to tighten its grip on East Jerusalem in the era of peace.

The land on which Har Homa



Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem Ehud Olmert shows reporters the area for the settlement that is to be built on Jabal Abu Ghneim

would be built was expropriated—unusually, more from Jewish than Arab owners—in May 1991, but no government has dared begin construction.

The Madrid peace conference, which commenced a new stage of Israeli-Arab diplomacy, began five months later, and the intervening years have seen accords with the Palestine Liberation Organization and Jordan in which Israel pledged to negotiate Jerusalem's future with its Arab partners.

Prime Minister Netanyahu is gambling that he can impose new facts on the ground, over Palestinian objections, without endangering the ongoing peace talks unduly. His closest Arab interlocutors say he is wrong, but it is not clear whether they will match their words with deeds.

His Majesty King Hussein used an interview with Israel's best-selling newspaper, Yedioth Aharonoth, to warn Netanyahu on Friday that Arabs "should not be taunted or humiliated" lest Israel "endanger all that we have accomplished up to now."

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said flatly, "I warn of a deterioration of this situation."

Netanyahu, realistically, has no hope of reconciling them, still less Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, to the project. Netanyahu's political strategy is to limit the regional backlash by winning the battle for world opinion.

To foreign audiences, Netanyahu is marketing the new development as a project of Arab-Jewish co-existence, with benefits to both Israelis and Palestinians. He repeatedly has linked construction of Har Homa's first 2500 Jewish apartments—actually, 6500 are approved—to what he says will

be 3015 new Arab homes. Netanyahu told interviewer David Frost last week in a televised conversation that the government is building "a greater number of Palestinian houses" than Jewish ones.

Foreign Minister David Levy, mistaking the official claim, likewise told a Tokyo news conference that he is "filled with pride that the Israeli cabinet

Cheshen calls the promise of Arab housing "a joke." It is necessary to grasp the differences between Har Homa and an Arab construction proposal.

Cheshen, who directed Arab affairs for the Jerusalem municipality until 1992, said the government is doing for Har Homa what it did for all Jewish building projects since 1967—taking ownership of the land, drawing the neighborhood plans, dividing the land into parcels and expediting the zoning decisions on each, soliciting bids from contractors and then distributing financial aid to the contractors and, later, apartment buyers.

It did not, however, grant permits for that for municipal planning boards. The last time Israel expropriated a large chunk of East Jerusalem for Jewish construction, in March 1980, it pledged to authorize 18000 Arab apartments in the Beit Hanina neighborhood alongside a new Jewish neighborhood, Pisgat Zeev.

The municipal planning board stalled the plan for years, cutting it to 16000 units, then 11000, then 7500, but still leaving it unapproved. Seventeen years later, not one Arab apartment has resulted.

Pisgat Zeev, by contrast, is today a suburb of 35200 Jews.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Islamist Ibrahim Zeid Al Kilani leaving the chamber

Deputies walk out

ISLAMIST DEPUTIES joined by deputies Nazih Ammarin and Khalil Haddadin walked out of the Lower House's session last Sunday. The deputies protested the government reply to their demand to suspend relations between Jordan and Israel, and to withdraw the Jordanian ambassador in Tel Aviv.

Addressing the House, deputy Hamza Mansour, spokesman of the 14-member Islamic bloc in the Lower House, demanded that the government terminate relations with Israel and withdraw Jordan's ambassador.

Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabarti responded quietly to the deputies' demand. He called for restraint. The Prime Minister asked whether suspending relations with Israel and withdrawing Jordan's ambassador in Tel Aviv could serve Jordanian interest. He added that suspending the treaty is a matter of sovereignty. Kabarti then asked deputies "to remain steadfast and not to walk out as a way to confront the issue." But the deputies walked out regardless. The deputies, who oppose the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, made their call to terminate relations with Israel as a reaction to the Israeli government decision to set up a Jewish neighborhood in Jabal Abu Ghneim.

The Islamist deputies boycotted Wednesday's session and are considering boycotting future sessions of the Lower House.

Sudan presents picture of different Islam

Continued from page 1

the dress codes visibly in Khartoum. It is not uncommon to find home-brewed alcohol in people's houses. Boys and girls continue to meet, despite the best efforts of the surveillance agencies.

"Their whole idea in this government is to remodel the Sudanese citizen," said one young lawyer in Khartoum, who asked not to be identified. "But they're finding it's not so easy to impose their Arab and Islamic policies on a country that has strong pulls in other directions, where the cultural identity of the people is not homogenous."

There are many reasons why Sudan's brand of Islam is different from that of its neighbors. Its population is 70 percent Muslim, with the rest of the people divided between Christianity and animist African religions. The influence of Africa's tribal culture, its clothes, music and languages, and its different mores about sex, divinity and other matters, is irrepressible.

"We are Africans who speak Arabic, we're an Arabized African community—and that influences everything we do," said Sayed Khatib, editor of the daily newspaper *Al-Inqad*. "Banning music, for instance, or treating women harshly the way they do in many Arab countries, would be very difficult to imagine here."

To some extent, the idea of a kinder, gentler Islam has received the backing of Hassan Turabi, the 65-year-old leader of the ruling National Islamic Front who is the real power behind the government of Sudan. Although Turabi insists the state should be an Islamic one, he says he believes in a modern interpretation of the Quran. He says, for instance, that women should be equal members of the society; music should be allowed; and apostates should not be put to death—opinions that have had the Sorbonne-educated Turabi branded a dangerous heretic by the stricter fundamentalists.

"Dr Turabi is on the liberal edge of Islamic theology," said one Western ambassador in Khartoum who asked not to be identified. "He believes that you have to read the Quran intelligently, and in the light of circumstances—not just take it at face value."

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The Star will publish a special French-language supplement to be distributed in France in cooperation with the Jordan Tourism Board during the activities of the Jordanian Season in France (March to August). The special issue will be published on 20 March and will provide Jordanian businesses with an opportunity to reach French public interested in Jordan. For more information about putting your message please call Mahmoud Fares on 645-380 or 652-380.

JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Minister resigns

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr Khalid Al Madhda, submitted his resignation earlier this week. Although he would not give any reason for this step, political observers speculate that Mr Madhda differed with Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabarti over the running of the Foreign Ministry. The Prime Minister controls the Foreign Ministry portfolio.

Booted out

Labor relations in this country don't too bright at the moment. The thing that is talked about most these days is the on-going industrial action by the engineers which seems to be fizzling out. However, there are others. About 100 workers in the Jordan Cigarettes and Tobacco Co., have been dismissed at point blank. They have now appealed to the Minister of Labor, Abdel Hafez Al Shakanbeh asking him to intervene so that they could be reinstated. In a memo sent to the minister, they said that the company's intention is to dismiss 400 more workers on the ground of rationalization. But if this is the case, then it would surely make their reinstatement doubly difficult. However, the workers are certainly not giving up hope. They have already contacted their trade unions, but apparently to no avail so far.

Unsavory business

The age of communication certainly does have its problems. A number of people were apprehended by the anti-corruption squad for possessing what is termed as "communication stations." These basically were cellular phones with aerials that secretly communicate with Israeli companies. Such activity has been going on now for the last three months from their homes. These stations have been used illegally and for commercial reasons competing against the Jordan Telecommunication Corp., something which lost the company great deal of money and goes against article 74 of the Telecommunications Law.

Letting the cat out of the bag

The cat is now out of the bag. There is no turning back. It could be a Pandora's box. These are all terms that may describe what is happening in the Islamic Action Front (IAF). While its leadership decided to vote not to join the government, this clearly was not the end of the story. Further splits? Well maybe. What is for sure is that IAF deputy Abdullah Al Akaileh, one of the men who started the boomers, is presently seeking to form a new 180-degree turn party.



Al Akaileh

But it would still presumably be an Islamic party, a lot more pragmatic in its approach and almost certainly join the government if it was asked to. Indeed some argue that this is what is all about. Al Akaileh wanted to join the government all along but he was prevented from doing so by the IAF party-whip. A new party would give him a fresh platform. If you were cynical, you would think that this is exactly what the government wants.

A split in the IAF would almost certainly create a big dent in the party. Al Akaileh is not like Ahmed Al Khasasbeh, Theib Abdallah, or even Zeyad Abu Ghaniemah, who split from the IAF on ideological differences. Observers suggest that these were one-man protests, that failed to have an effect. Al Akaileh on the other hand represents moderate, pragmatic trend. Among its members include IAF deputy Bassam Al Omoush, Hussam Ghazisbeh, Yasser Abu Hilaleh, Hilmi Al Asmar and Samieh Al Maitah. The last two were editors of the Islamic Al Sabeel weekly who quit all of a sudden from the newspaper.

Tourism in Petra

More and more tourists are visiting this country. Last year, it was the highest ever, surpassing the 1 million mark. This is really very good news for the tourism industry in Jordan. Officials expect this figure to increase further in 1997. Already figures look good. About 25,687 tourists for instance, visited Petra during February. Again 22,498 of these were foreigners, while 2350 were Jordanians from around the country. Tourism is, obviously an income spinner. Collected revenues just from ticket sales to enter that ancient city was about JD 630,000.

A forgotten neighborhood

Al Duweik, a neighborhood between Al Zerga and Al Russeifa, is today a forgotten area. For some reason or another, it lacks all public amenities. The area with a population of 5000 does not have water, electricity or asphalted roads. It has become an eyesore. One of the problems could be the fact of simply a mistaken identity.

The Al Duweik neighborhood lies right on the demarcation lines between the Zerga and Russeifa Municipalities; and consequently over the years, it has been allowed to stagnate. Nudging officials from the municipalities have done nothing for the people of the area who are left today without water and electricity. People are literally living on candlelights! They have to pay for their own water due to the fact that the neighborhood is not linked to the water network. But even paying for water tanks can also be a hazard. Tank drivers refuse to drive up to their houses because it is not asphalted. The same goes for taxis and even for ambulances. What is amazing is that not 500 meters up the road, and in a different neighborhoods, all public amenities do exist.

So what can we say about this? Bureaucratic mismanagement? Well that could certainly be the case. Up till now officials have basically washed their hands off the neighborhood relegating the people's demands to fiscal imbalances, and budgetary constraints and allocation is. However, the Zerga Municipality have now agreed to put things right. They have sent a "technical committee" up to the Al Duweik neighborhood and promised for a plan of action. We are yet to wait and see what they would do.

A sign of the times

Is this the way forward? Are political parties fed up with remaining small? Are we to see bigger political parties. The leftists are doing it, the Baathists are on the verge and the centrists have gone full way. Eight political parties have thrown the towel in and decided to merge into one big National Constitutional Party. The parties include, Progress and Justice, Al Abd, Wael, The Jordan National Alliance, Al Watan, Al Yaktha and the Popular Unity Party. It took them nearly two years of negotiations to come to this step. But the merger possess more questions than answers. Who will lead for instance, is on everyone's lips? This is not an easy question to answer? Will it be a one-man show or a collective leadership. Even if they go for the latter, who will be the one collective voice of the party? Parties must in the final analysis have leaders and this party is no exception.

International fairs could be a way for Israeli companies

AMMAN (Star)—A new tactic is being adopted by Jordanians who support normalizing relations with Israel—at least on the economic level. They are inviting Israeli companies to participate through international fairs to be held in Amman.

This new step by pro-normalization businessmen comes to try and bypass the hammer of the anti-normalization lobby and the majority of businessmen who put up a strong show of force against the "Israeli trade fair" held in Amman early last January.

There are two different international fairs that are due to be held this year with Israeli attendance. "The Protection and Security Expo" is organized by the Arab Corp. For Security and Protection planned for 14 April, while the other "The Peace Building Fair", is organized by Wings Expo Corp., and set to take place sometime this year.

A fair of Israeli and Palestinian products that was organized for the end of February was cancelled. The organizers, the Golden Group for Fairs got called feet after seeing the scale of opposition in early January.

An official in the Golden Group, who preferred anonymity said that "we canceled the plan for the fair as a result of what happened in front of the latest Israeli trade fair."

adding that "our plan was to bring Palestinian and Israeli companies here in Amman, in fact we focused on Palestinian companies." He pointed out that his company cancelled the fair to avoid any misunderstandings.

However, as to the two other fairs that will be held in Amman, it's a different story.

The Jordanian Export Development and Expo Centers Corp. (JEDDEC)—the authority in charge—has already included these fairs on this year's venue. According to JEDDEC sources the reservations are already made, and they will be held in the International Expo Center, the same place where the "Israeli trade fair" took place.

The last Israeli product fair was a failure admitted its organizer, Fakhari Al Nasser. He said that the fair failed because no deals were made between Israeli businessmen and "it is difficult to deal with the Israelis" Al Nasser added.

Al Nasser who is the manager of the International and National Expo Corp. admits that his business with the



Fair organizers don't want to be responsible for scenes like this which characterized the 1st day of the opening of the Israeli trade expo in Marj Al Hamam last January.

Israeli was a "lost cause." He said he did not wish to repeat the last experience and did not wish Israeli companies to participate in the "Security and Protection Expo." However, this is not final and he is still mulling over his options which means that he might be persuaded in inviting Israeli companies.

However, other sources at JEDDEC stressed that what they organize is international exhibitions where countries

from different parts of the world participate in. They would not rent its halls to an Israeli-only trade fair.

At the end of the day, it is up to the Ministry of Trade and Industry to grant permission to the holding of any trade fair. So far no permission has been granted yet. However, the Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade, Dr Mohammad Beni Hani strongly denied that there are any Israeli trade fairs on this year's agenda.

Jordanians prepare for a legal battle over properties in Israel

Continued from page 1

Yemen, and eastern Jordan (at that time) and also includes Palestinian inhabitants who left Palestine or were living outside.

Article two of the law placed all properties under the custody of the so-called "absentee property guard" who is assigned by the Israeli Minister of Finance.

The Israeli claimed lands are divided into two parts, state lands and private lands. About 90 percent (of 1948 occupied Palestine) are state or emiri lands, unsalable, but with special conditions related to joint Israeli-foreign investments.

Furthermore, articles 7 and 32 of the same law gave the Israeli government the right to cut the expenses of "custody services" from the value of the property. This means that huge amounts of money accumulated along the past 50 years.

Article 22 emphasizes the right of the "absentee" to

lodge legal action before Israeli courts.

According to sources there are a number of cases being considered by Israeli courts in the regard.

But the issue is complicated. Since its creation, Israel has gravely changed the topographical markings of most of these lands in Palestine by re-surveying and re-zoning them before they came under the control of the "absentee property guard."

Legal sources told *The Star* that the Israeli position in that regard is "weak" if taken in accordance with international obligations under the peace treaty. The sources confirmed that the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty guaranteed Jordanian national rights in lands and water, and guaranteed the rights of Jordanian citizens in their properties in Israel.

According to these sources, there are four kinds of original documents that prove the ownerships of lands for Jordanians (of Palestinian origin and others)

which were occupied by Israel.

The first document was given to Israel by the authorities of the British mandate at that time, the second is documented by the British government itself, also the British government documented the third copy in its military base in Cyprus, while the fourth document is in the hands of the Jordanian government.

Jordanian documents in the Lands and Survey Department include about 400 Ottoman files that go back to 1860 and another 50 Palestinian files dating to the 1930s. The documented information also includes 389 microfilm rolls of 16mm and 951 microfilm rolls of 35mm, the department also has 170 files on properties in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

During the 1960s a UN envoy made copies of these documents on 16mm films. Later on a UN committee worked on documenting and classifying those files,

which were later printed on 16mm and 35mm microfilms, totalling 1340 microfilms that are now kept at the UN headquarters in New York. A Jordanian ambassador to the UN sought copies of these microfilms in the early 1970s.

But some experts fear that these microfilms may be in a bad state as a result of inappropriate storing.

In west Jerusalem, occupied by the Israelis in 1948, documents of the "municipality of land in west Jerusalem" prove that 40 percent of land in west Jerusalem was owned by Arabs before the Israeli occupation in 1948 and 34 percent was under the control of Islamic Awqaf, churches and monasteries. The rest of the land was seized by the British mandate and later given to the Jews when British occupation abandoned Palestine.

People & Politics

Rumble in the jungle

It was sort of a rumble in Jordan's political jungle. Minister of Interior Dr Awad Khleifat broke the silence and gave a brief recap of his own political evolution and his achievements at the ministry before a group of invited deputies, politicians and journalists. It was not clear what Dr Khleifat's motives were. He is not decisive about his next political move: is the Maan deputy planning to run for reelection? Or is he polishing his image in preparation for a new government assignment? These questions are being raised in the backdrop of rumors of long-standing tensions between him and Prime Minister Kabarti. And to make things more interesting, the affable Dr Khleifat hinted, during last week's dinner, that he was not in total agreement with the government's decision to end bread and fodder subsidies, although he had signed the executive order just like the rest of cabinet members.

But what is more interesting than Dr Khleifat's revelations, is the systematic attack he came under by influential daily columnist at *Al-Ran* newspaper, Dr Fahd Al Fanek. Al Fanek's vociferous attack on the minister is unjustified unless he too has ulterior motives. The widely-read columnist alleged that Dr Khleifat, the first academic to take charge of the Ministry of Interior, was brought for a certain mission: that mission it became clear to Dr Fanek was to "pull the rug from underneath the feet of the Palestinian state by competing with it for its people." Dr Fanek's outrage was directed at Dr Khleifat's decision to grant 2500 Palestinian bedouins from Beir Al Sabe, who have been living in Jordan for decades, Jordanian passports. In Dr Fanek's view such a move has effectively "confiscated their right of return to Gaza" [why on earth would they want to go to Gaza?]. Dr Fanek's attack, which was launched in two consecutive articles, failed to pinpoint Dr Khleifat's motives behind his alleged competition with the Palestinian Authority.

Dr Fanek fails to see any good coming from the minister's reforms at the Ministry of Interior. Instead of praising him for attacking nepotism, as practised by his predecessors who have issued his permits to relatives and friends, Dr Fanek says the minister has failed to come with a solution. In fact, Dr Fanek speculates that the only purpose of the minister's elaborate press conference—to which Dr Fanek was not invited it seems—is to prepare for his reelection campaign. He might be right, but isn't this what politicians are expected to do: Hold press meetings and speak of their achievements?

Dr Fanek's two-day verbose offence, did not pass without certain rebuttal—but not from the imminent minister. The reply to Dr Fanek came from former government minister and member of the peace delegation Marwan Dudin. Dudin's bitter response was elicited by Dr Fanek's denunciation of Dr Khleifat's "unlimited compassion" for the Beir Al Sabe bedouins, who according to Dudin, deserve their Jordanian nationality after living in Jordan for over half a century. Mr Dudin, who heads Jordan's delegation to the multilateral talks on refugees, assured Dr Fanek that Palestinian refugees do not lose their right to return to Palestine regardless of where they live now or how many nationalities or passports they hold. Having said this, Dudin thanked God that Dr Fanek was not a decision maker in this country.

Defending the fort

A government spokesman has the most difficult job in the world—more difficult than the prime minister. He has to defend government actions at any cost. A lonely soldier guarding the gate, taking in questions, insinuations and accusations that fall on him like poisoned arrows from every direction. Last week Minister of Information, Dr Mawam Muasher, who is also the official spokesman, described the annual report of the Arab Organization for Human Rights in Jordan as positive and that it is for the government and not against it! Those who read the report (*The Star*, 27 February, 1997), failed to see these positive signs. But we might be wrong. Dr Muasher is right on one point: the report has become more like a political manifesto than a scientific document. Still, we don't think it gives the government a good-conduct citation.

Dr Muasher may have been too eager this time to defend the fort because according to him he did not see in the report one single violation of human rights. His statements, in *Ad Distour*, vindicated the government completely. Excellent defence on his excellency's part, but you might want to beef up the night watch in the coming days—just in case.

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6 MARCH 1997

Sudan presents picture of different Islam

Continued from page 1

Under violent in Sudan. It is the first time in the history of the country that a group of people have been killed in a public place. Boys and girls were killed in the streets. The head of the state security forces, General Abdel Rahman, said that the Sudanese government is not responsible for the deaths. He said that the deaths were the result of a civil war between different groups of people. He said that the government is trying to bring peace to the country. He said that the government is not responsible for the deaths. He said that the deaths were the result of a civil war between different groups of people. He said that the government is trying to bring peace to the country.

Classified

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Middle East Beat by Khairi Janbek

Negation of a nation

6 MARCH 1997

Business scene

■ Al Quds Insurance Co., increased its profits by five percent at JD 6,638,703 in 1996. The car insurance branch had the biggest stake, with premiums at JD 3,653, 596, accounting for 47 percent of the total. According to the company's annual report, net insurance revenues were JD 443,109, showing a slight decline due to losses of compulsory vehicle insurance. Al Quds Insurance maintains technical reserves of JD 3,081,763, and shareholders' rights were JD 3,607,199. Its paid up capital of JD 1,075,000 is to be increased before the end of this year to JD 2 million.

■ A \$100 million complex in Gaza would soon be under construction. It would include an office block, a conference hall, restaurants, car park and a five-star Marriott Hotel. The project is owned by the American-based General Resources Design Group, the Qatari Al Salam International Investment Co., and the Palestinian National Authority. Western businessmen are expected to visit this center which will enhance tourism and business activities in Gaza. The project involves more than 2000 workers. At the end of the construction it will provide permanent jobs for 600 people and a further 4000 job opportunities for related activities. It is expected to provide \$50 million to the Gaza economy.

■ The paid-up capital of the Philadelphia Investment Bank was increased to JD 20 million by finance provided by Arab investors. Among them are the Saudi Prince Al Walid Bin Talal and others from Qatar and UAE. The Bank is now able to cover its commitments by doubling its capital to JD 20 million (in two phases) by the end of June. The Philadelphia Bank increased revenues by 117% to JD 2.2 million in 1996. Its total assets reached JD 59 million and deposits of clients were JD 34.6 million in mid-1996.

■ Al Salam International for Transport and Trade Co. will be declared next week giving a push to tourism industry in Jordan. The company's founders are Ahmed Armoush, Al-Nahda for Trade Services and Transport, International for Container Services, Al Nasr for Trade and Farah International for Transport and Trade. They put up 50% of the capital while the rest is to be provided by private subscription.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 5 March

| | Buy JD | Sell JD |
|-----------|--------|---------|
| US\$ | 0.7080 | 0.7100 |
| £ | 1.1432 | 1.1489 |
| DM | 0.4152 | 0.4173 |
| SFR | 0.4772 | 0.4796 |
| FRF | 0.1231 | 0.1237 |
| YEN (100) | 0.5678 | 0.5706 |
| DEL | 0.3699 | 0.3717 |
| LIT (100) | 0.0421 | 0.0423 |

Foodstuff aid arrives in Iraq by month's end, amidst frustrating Iraqi mood

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

THE DELAY in implementing the UN oil-for-food deal is interpreted as a deliberate attempt to squeeze Iraq.

Although the deal became effective last December 10, Iraq have received no shipments so far.

This is due to obstacles put by the US envoy, who is a member in the UN sanctions committee in charge of supervising the distribution of humanitarian aid (including foodstuffs and pharmaceuticals) in Iraq.

The last few weeks saw a heated dispute between Iraqi and UN officials, as each blamed the other for the delay of arrival of humanitarian aid to Iraq. The UN blames Iraq which, according to UN officials, is not cooperating regarding the access of UN officials (including telecommunication systems and transportation) who will supervise the distribution of the shipments in Iraq.

Sources at the UN confirmed that the shipments will start soon, while unconfirmed sources said that some ship

ments already arrived in Iraq last Saturday. Conflicting UN reports said that commodities would be on their way to Iraq at the same time as UN experts arrival in Iraq within three weeks.

About 70 international supervisors are presently in Iraq but the total is expected to rise to 150-160. These are being trained and are introduced to their locations by the co-operation of Iraqi officials.

Regarding the effect of the delay of shipments on Jordan, bankers and exporters assure that no foodstuffs or pharmaceuticals have been carried from Jordan so far.

The Director-General of the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres (JEDCC) Dr. Mohammed Al-Halaka told *The Star* "that no shipments up till now were exported from Jordan, although we are looking forward to increase the size of our trade exchange with Iraq, whether on the basis of the trade protocol or the oil-for-food deal."

The Iraqi oil minister, Amer Mohammed Rasheed said last week that the UN sanctions Committee had approved 10

humanitarian contracts out of the more than 200 contracts submitted by Iraq.

Rasheed pointed out that Iraq hopes to get the green light from the UN to increase the volume of its oil sales this week upon prior agreement that Iraq has the right to ask for the increase of oil sales within three months of implementation of the oil for food deal. UN officials however deny that there is such an agreement.

The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Mohammed Sa'ed Al-Sahaf recently held talks with the UN General Secretary, Kofi Annan on the need to increase Iraqi oil exports to meet minimum humanitarian aid needs.

Iraq can currently export 2.5 million barrels of oil daily and is badly in need for spareparts to increase these exports to three million barrels daily.

In a press conference last Monday in Baghdad, Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammed Mahdi Saleh was quoted as saying that the UN sanctions committee approved nine from 222 contracts. These are worth \$673.9 million.

Saleh added that Iraq exported oil estimated at \$850

million since last 10 December. \$625.5 million were deposited in a special fund under UN supervision.

About 30 percent of this was for compensation, five percent for utilization of UN, other sums were deducted to cover other UN expenses and the remainder, which is 400 million, was not utilized until last February, Saleh maintained.

Contracts approved by the UN committee include deals with France, Australia, Sri Lanka and Britain to export rice, wheat, baby milk, tea and pharmaceuticals.

Other contracts concluded with Jordan, Egypt and Turkey were not approved by the committee, according to Saleh. While earlier information indicated that the shipments started to arrive in Iraq last Saturday, Saleh pointed out that the first foodstuff shipment is expected in Iraq within three weeks. A vessel which carries 25,000 tons of French wheat will arrive in Iraq's Umm Qasr port by the end of this month.

It also implies that aid distribution will not take place before next April.

The Iraqi Trade Minister

stressed that the Aqaba port will be given priority in transit exports. He added that Iraq signed \$350,000 contracts with global concerns to be imported via Aqaba.

However, because of its proximity and competitive prices, Dubai will be a trade mediator for Iraq, Saleh said.

Although the approval of the \$2 billion oil-for-food formula, was welcomed by Jordanian manufacturers, the delay of shipments to Iraq is seen by analysts as an American attempt to block endeavours to lift sanctions.

There are about 47 Jordanian companies that received UN committee approval to export foodstuffs, vegetable oils, detergents and pharmaceuticals worth \$110 million to Iraq. Ali Al-Dajani of the Chamber of Industry told *The Star*.

Jordan is the first country to get approval and this is attributed to the high quality of products and their competitive price, delivery and specifications, he said.

"We hope to increase the volume of Jordanian exports to Iraq in view of the \$255 million trade protocol lately renewed between Jordan and Iraq," Ali Dajani added.

It was stated earlier that the UN did not approve Jordanian contracts claiming that they were not up to standard, however, Al-Halaka refuted this. He clarified that there were differences on the issue of paying indemnity to Iraq in cases of delay in delivery. While the Jordanian view was to give this compensation directly to Iraq, UN officials insist that this has to be within the control of the bank that is in charge of the whole process.

Tourism in Cyprus set for an even brighter future

AMMAN (Star)—Cyprus will remain a popular tourist destination, the Director of Cyprus Tourism Organization, Mr. Cleonthis Nafitis said.

Cyprus attracts thousands of tourists every year. Mr. Nafitis explained that Tourism in Cyprus experienced impressive growth in the '80s and '90 both in the number of arrivals and in the number of hotels.

"Over the past few years, arrivals stabilized at about two million annually and earnings reached \$1.7 billion."

Tourism in Cyprus is a major sector of the economy. Its GDP contribution is approximately 21 percent, while its earnings are 40.3 percent of total revenue from goods and services exports.

"Our policy is geared to enhance quality and attract higher spending tourists, rather than maximize tourist arrivals. We at the Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO) want to upgrade the standards of our tourist product," he added.

These include the creation of new sports facilities, additional



Nafitis

golf courses, development of nautical tourism with the creation of new marines and the upgrading of existing ones, with the introduction of new forms of tourism, such as agrotourism.

For Cyprus to continue to get its share in tourism, the CTO is launching this year its biggest ever marketing cam-

aign. "Our advertising and promotion budget for 1997 has been set at \$16.2 million, almost 17 percent higher than the previous year. Our marketing program envisages extensive advertising campaigns in all our major markets," Mr. Nafitis stressed.

"The Middle East is important for our tourism industry," he pointed out. Records show that arrivals from Arab countries have been stable over the last few years, at about 110,000, which is about 55 percent of the total tourist traffic. More than six percent of the total tourism earnings come from the Middle East countries.

"We aim at attracting a higher number of Middle East visitors and have increased our marketing budget in 1997 by 35 percent. We are launching a brand new advertising campaign focused primarily in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf

states."

Cyprus's 9000-year history, along with the traditional warmth and hospitality, with the excellent facilities proves an ideal place.

"We believe that Cyprus offers an excellent tourist product, characterized by high quality and variety, meeting the needs and expectations of a demanding tourist clientele," Mr. Nafitis said.

At the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa, Cyprus can be combined with mini cruises to neighboring Middle East countries, or the Greek islands.

"We are convinced that our island can meet the expectations of every visitor. There is something for everyone, young and old, in search for pleasure, fun, activity, study of civilization and physical beauty. This is why a large proportion of our tourist traffic are repeat visitors and according to surveys they feel comfortable and welcome in our country," he pointed out.

McDonald's US franchisees agree to slash burger prices

By Richard Tomkins

NEW YORK—US franchisees of McDonald's, the fast food company, have overwhelmingly approved the company's plan to slash prices in an effort to stimulate flagging sales in the intensely competitive burger market.

The sales campaign, which will see the price of a Big Mac cut from \$1.90 to 55 cents, comes in response to slowing market growth and tough competition from Burger King, owned by Grand Metropolitan of the UK, and Wendy's International. It marks an abrupt shift from the company's previous strategy of introducing more high-priced items.

Called "Campaign 55", the promotion will commemorate Mr. Ray Kroc's 1955 opening of the first McDonald's in the

Chicago suburb of Des Plaines. The campaign, due to start in 55 days, is expected to include improved service as well as price cuts. McDonald's denied reports that customers would be offered a free burger if their order failed to arrive in 55 seconds.

Announcing the franchisees' decision last Friday, McDonald's said the vote in every region was well ahead of the 75 per cent required when outlets are asked to take part in a national program.

There had been speculation that the franchisees, which own and operate 85 per cent of the 12,094 McDonald's restaurants in the US, might vote against the plan because it would erode profit margins.

However, Wall Street ana-



lysts have pointed out that the price cuts are not as big as they appear. If a 55 cent Big Mac is bought with a full-price serving of fries and a drink, the total outlay is only about 5 per cent less than the cost of the same items bought as a combination meal.

The franchisees, which are as worried as McDonald's about the company's loss of market share, appear to have calculated that they have more to gain from increased sales than they will lose from thinner margins.

Mr. Jack Greenberg, chairman of McDonald's USA, said: "We are pleased that our owner-operators weighed the facts carefully and came to the same conclusion as we did. This initiative will be good for customers, our franchisees and our business."

Other fast food operators have said that they will maintain prices at current levels, but analysts say a price war could break out.

Financial Times
News Service

Business Chronicle

Investments face challenges, analysts argue

DESPITE THE fact that officials assure us, every now and then, that the investment climate in Jordan is improving and promising, a number of businessmen have felt the opposite.

They argue that the climate is not as encouraging as it should pointing out that many are losing. Some have even decided to close their factories in the country and move elsewhere.

One investor stresses that routine bureaucratic procedures hinders anyone who may wish to employ his capital in Jordan. He added that within one week only, and without his presence, he was able to register a company overseas through his lawyer. The case is different in this country. Potential investors would have to go through numerous channels and referred to different departments before their investment projects are approved.

In addition, investors face numerous other difficulties not least of which from the so-called big fish which dominate the local market.

Small investors are held in check by bigger ones, who compete in such a small-sized market. Another investor points out that a sizable amount of capital has been invested outside the country. They are looking for a more attractive investment climate, easier measures, concerning customs, taxes, inspection by health officers, and better specifications to guarantee high quality and standard of products.

After entering the market, the manufacturer faces a new challenge to promote and sell his products. He faces stiff competition from imported industrial products.

These difficulties lead to losses and force the investor to close his company and look for another outlet.

Such problems associated with encouraging incentives in neighboring countries or even European ones, make it easier for Jordanian and foreign investors to transfer their capital and invest anywhere but not in Jordan.

Available figures indicate that there are more than 800 companies operating in Romania with Jordanian capital, more than 150 Jordanian factories in Egypt and others in the Gulf and Canada.

The investment climate in the country is seen by analysts and observers as unable to improve unless distortions and obstacles are removed. This is a must not only to attract more Arab and foreign investments but also, at least, to maintain current investments and win the satisfaction of local ones.

10 years flying high

BRITISH AIRWAYS celebrated the 10th anniversary of its privatization with renewed commitment to retain its place at the forefront of the industry.

During its release on the private sector, British Airways firmly established itself as the world's leading airline. That has been reflected in a profitability records second to none in the industry—and rising stock values.

In the 10 years, the airline invested £1 billion in improved customer services, winning the prestigious Business Traveller World's Best Airline Award eight years running and countless other awards.

Through its World Offer fares program, it has led the way in the UK in making air travel more widely available and affordable. Many fares today are cheaper than they were 10 years ago. The lowest public return fare to New York in 1987 was £319. Today, World Offer bargains have been on offer from £199. The cheapest ticket to Sydney and back a decade ago was £835. Today it is down to £720.

Shares in British Airways were offered to the public at 125 pence each, with trading beginning in London and New York at 2.30 pm GMT on February 11, 1987, with an instant 53 pence premium.

The offer was 11 times over subscribed. The share register opened with 1.1 million names, halving after a year and gradually reducing since then to the current 235,000.

In a message to customers, shareholders and employees to mark the anniversary, Bob Ayling, BA chief executive, said: "British Airways has travelled a long way in the decade since our privatization. We have built our success on a firm commitment to customer services, cost control and our ability to change with the times and new

demands. That will stay time same. Our aim now is to create a new airline for the new millennium. In September we announced a £1 billion business efficiency program which will ensure we fly into the year 2000 as truly the world's favourite airline, the first choice in every market we serve, with pre-eminence in customer service remaining our hall mark."

British Airways announced a record pre-tax profits.

The pre-tax profits for the third quarter to 31 December, 1996, was £113 million, up 8.7 percent on the same period a year ago. This took the nine months level to £583 million, up £49 million, or 9.2 per cent, on the record set a year ago.

The result means the airline

has reported some £3,250 million of pre-tax profits in the 10 years since its shares were sold to the public.

Turnover rose 6.4 percent to £2,016 million, taking the nine month figure to £6,410 million, up 8.2 percent.

Passenger traffic in the three months rose 9 percent in terms of revenue passenger kilometres, although the strength of sterling forced yields—the amount received for each kilometre flown—down 1.8 per cent. Overall, 71.2 percent of available seats were sold, another record.

Cargo operations continue to be affected by excess capacity in the market and fierce price competition, with cargo revenue down 2.7 percent, at £146 million.

Jordan's 1st phosphoric acid batch to India by April

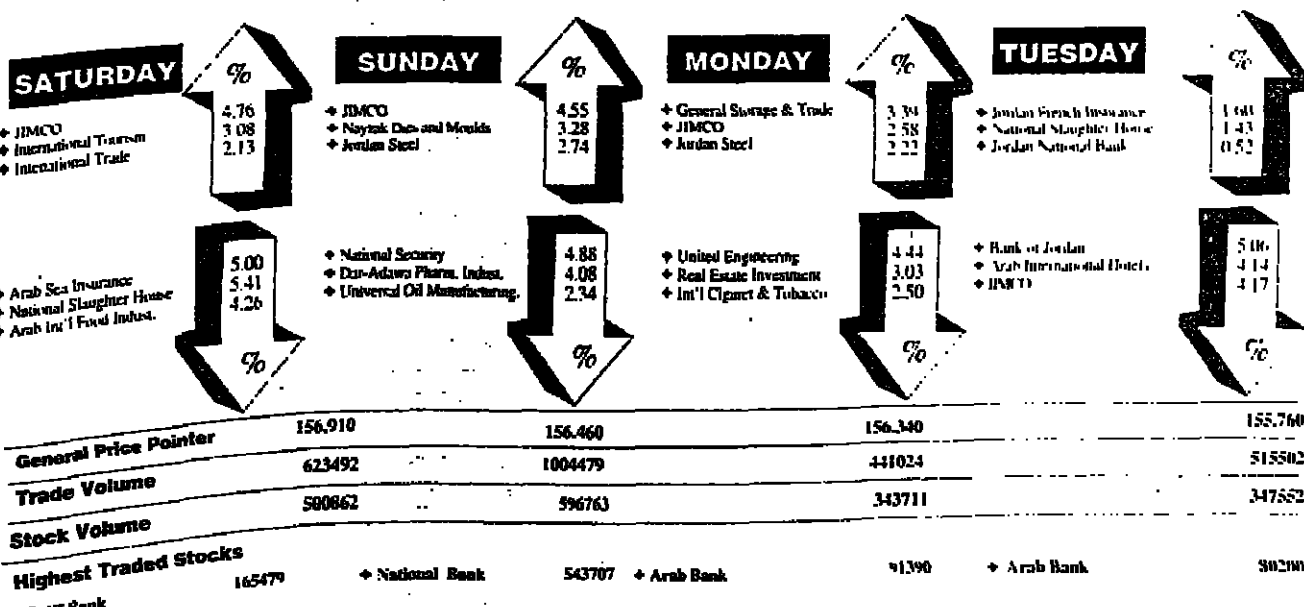
AMMAN (Star)—The first batch of phosphoric acid produced by a joint Jordanian-Indian chemical factory is to be exported to India by next April. Indian and Jordanian sources declared last Thursday at the end of the Jordanian-Indian trade promotion week.

The factory's products, expected to reach \$90 million by the end of this year, will be totally exported to India to be used in manufacturing chemical and phosphate fertilisers. Addressing a gathering of Indian and Jordanian public and private sectors' representatives at a celebration held by the Indian Embassy in Amman, Assistant Secretary General of the Ministry of Industry and Trade Mohammed Bani Hani stressed that Jordan has become a gate to the region and an investment-friendly country which attracts investments because of many factors, atop of which are political stability and the availability of skilled labour and excellent infrastructure.

Chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce Haidar Murad said in a speech on the same occasion that the volume of trade exchange between India and Jordan reached about \$228 million in 1995, the trade balance tipped in favour of Jordan. On his part, the Indian ambassador in Amman, Mr. Gajanan Wakdekar, said that hundreds of Jordanian businessmen visited India last year, boosting cooperation between the two countries.

MARKET WATCH

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market



All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646668 Fax: 646439

Conference on economic opportunities in Mediterranean to be held in March

THE EURO-Med Conference on "Opportunities for Investment in the Mediterranean Region" will take place on 6-7 March at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London.

British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind announced at Barcelona in November 1995 the UK's intention to host this Conference as part of Britain's contribution to the EU's Mediterranean initiative.

The Conference is intended to publicise and promote investment opportunities in the emerging markets of the Mediterranean. It is targeted at investors, businesses and financial institutions in the EU, as well as businesses in

the region looking for partnerships and inward investment.

The 12 countries from the region will give presentations. Business Investor Guides are being prepared for the Conference participants. These are the product of a study into conditions for portfolio and inward investment in the Mediterranean, jointly funded by the UK's Overseas Development Administration and the European Commission.

Mr Rifkind will give the opening address. The keynote address will be given by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan who has had a pivotal role in trying to bring the regional countries of the Mediterranean closer to European

thinking. Other key speakers will include European Commission Vice President Manuel Marin, as well as investors already active in the region.

Malcolm Rifkind said, "I am delighted that the UK will stage this major international Conference. This will give fresh impetus to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership launched in Barcelona. The Mediterranean basin is an area of economic opportunity in the making. Investors from the UK and other EU countries have a vital contribution to make to the success of economic reforms in these Mediterranean countries."

Under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

launched at Barcelona ("the Barcelona Process") the following 12 countries have concluded or are negotiating Association Agreements with the EU. These are: Jordan, Algeria, Malta, Cyprus, Morocco, Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, Israel, Syria, Tunisia, Lebanon, Turkey.

The EU and other donors are providing funds to assist Mediterranean Partners with economic reforms underpinning their liberalisation of trade.

The Euro-Med Conference is being organised by the Royal Institute of International Affairs in association with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the European Commission.

Pakistan open for business on Fridays now

By Kenneth J. Cooper

NEW DELHI, India—Pakistan was open for business last Friday, the first time in two decades that government offices and most private concerns in the Islamic nation have operated on a Friday.

In one of his first acts in office, newly elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif ordered a shift to a Saturday-Sunday weekend to conform to Western practice and help Pakistan attract more foreign investment and trade. Since 1977, most Pakistanis have not worked on Friday, when devout Muslims follow a religious instruction to assemble in mosques for afternoon prayers.

The unilateral decision by Sharif, a former industrialist, surprised business leaders who had been pushing for a realignment of the nation's work week. Last year, the Karachi Stock Exchange—the nation's largest—and textile exporters in Faisalabad abandoned attempts to make Friday a work day after drawing opposition from religious parties and failing to attract support from the weakened government of then-Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

The Holy Koran, Islam's holy book, does not prohibit work on Friday. But most of the Islamic world—except for a few countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Turkey—has adopted the custom of closing work places and taking Fridays off.

Pakistan, created in 1947 as a haven for the Muslims of British India, observed a Western-style weekend for 30 years until Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto introduced the Islamic custom in an unsuccessful attempt to retain power by winning over

Muslim clerics.

Arif Habib, president of the Karachi Stock Exchange, said last month that the market had "given up" on the idea and lost hope that any future government would risk offending devout Muslims. But securing a two-thirds majority in parliament—the largest majority that any Pakistani party has ever enjoyed—appears to have emboldened Sharif, who made no move to alter the work week when he was prime minister from 1990 to 1993.

"This was a demand of the business community for a very long time," said Ilyas Bilour, president of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry. "The factories are open, the business houses are open and all the shops are open today. We are quite happy."

Offices of federal and provincial governments, including state-owned banks, opened in the morning for a half day. So did the stock exchange in Karachi. Bilour said factories stayed open all day but gave workers time off in the afternoon to attend mosques.

Pakistan's largest religious party, Jamaat-e-Islami, staged street protests Thursday against the change and continued demonstrations around the nation Friday. The party boycotted the 3 February election and therefore has no elected representatives who could challenge Sharif's decision in parliament.

"If we do have a weekly holiday, it should be Friday," said Syed Munawar Hasan, the party's secretary general. "The Muslims should have sanctity for Friday. Christians have Sunday. The Jews have Saturday."

Bilour predicted more opportunity for contact with foreign businesses on

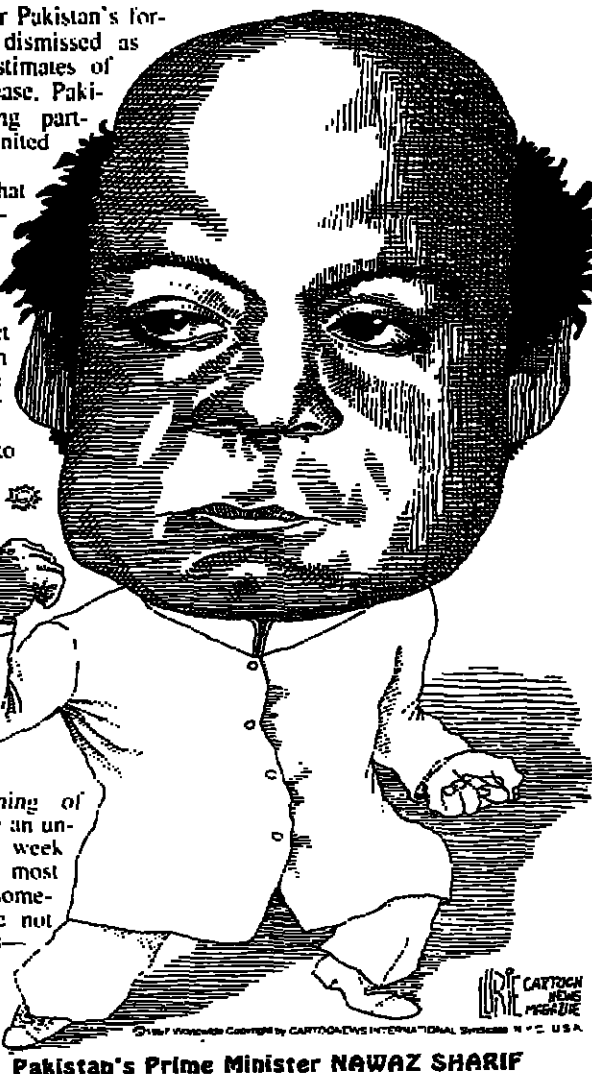
Fridays would bolster Pakistan's foreign trade, but he dismissed as unreliable various estimates of the size of the increase. Pakistan's largest trading partners are the United States and Japan.

Hasan disputed that Pakistan would realize an increase in international commerce, noting that the nation would lose business contact on Sundays with such Islamic countries as Saudi Arabia, another major trading partner.

"It has very little to do with business and trade. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates—they have more exports than Pakistan, and they take Friday as a holiday," Hasan said.

Sharif announced the change in a televised speech last Sunday, the beginning of what turned out to be an unusually long work week here. This weekend, most Pakistanis will do something else they have not done for 20 years—take Sunday off.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Pakistan's Prime Minister NAWAZ SHARIF



Palestinians perform Friday prayers in a field at the foot of Jabal Abu Ghneim, whilst two Israeli soldiers look on. The decision by Likud Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to build an Israeli settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim has created much controversy and could mean an end to the already ailing peace process. See front page story.

Netanyahu is dead, long live Deri

By Barry Chamish

RUMOURS, NAY, news of Benjamin Netanyahu's impending demise are rife. It seems he flunked his police interrogation and charges will be brought against him for appointing Roni Bar-On as his State Attorney-General in order to appease the blackmailer Ariele Deri. Once in power, Bar-On agreed to arrange a plea bargain for Deri that would put an end to his years on trial for fraud and embezzlement and pave the way for his return to the cabinet.

The issue Deri used was Hebron: if he didn't get his way, his 10-seat Shas Party would vote against the withdrawal from Hebron and so, bring down the government.

Netanyahu is the victim of a media putsch that will see either a unity government or elections. The brave reporters of Israel pooled their resources and managed to get Netanyahu out. This is not the time to defend the Prime Minister, what he did was despicable. So controlled is he by the forces of the Council On Foreign Relations that he sold out the first capital of Judaism, Hebron, for a bribe to the far more despicable Arie Deri.

But that has been the way of the "peace" process from day one. And that is the point: the Israeli media

has been most selective in its choice of scandals. Barely a month ago, the Gidron Commission charged the former head of the Investigations Department of Israel Police of passing secret information to Deri about which of his and his cronies' phones were tapped.

Apparently the conduit for these invaluable tips was Eli Barak, head of the Jewish Unit, the dirty tricks department of the Shabak whose goal is to weaken resistance to the handover of Jewish cities and towns in the Occupied Territories by criminalizing the Jewish residents of these so-called settlements and their supporters. Barak's biggest operation was the running of Avishai Ravid, who eventually provoked Yigal Amir into shooting a blank bullet at Yitzhak Rabin's back, thus demonizing all opposition to the "peace" process.

Burak flunked his lie detector test when asked questions about the role he played in Dotan's nefarious schemes. But his boss, then-Shabak head Yaacov Perry didn't do so either. The Gidron inquiry found his results "inconclusive."

Clearly, Netanyahu's acceptance of Deri's extortion demand was scandalous. But if the Israeli media had wanted to build up another Deri-based scandal, here is a REAL scandal they chose not to investigate.

Literally, at the same time that Netanyahu was being questioned, the same police force announced that it would be sending investigators to Belgium to get to the bottom of the now-buried Avi Dotan affair. According to Yedior Ahronot (20/1/97), the police will be asking for cooperation from their Belgium counterparts about two alleged crimes. First, "The suspicion that Dotan accepted a bribe for implicating a Belgium diamond seller in the wiretapping charges contained in the Gidron Report." Currently, there is not enough public information to know what this charge is all about. But we can make an educated guess that the bribe came from either Deri or the Internal Security (police) Minister of the previous government, Moshe Shahal.

How can such a risky supposition be made? Just look at the second charge. "According to police suspicions, then-Director of the Office of Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal, Avi Dotan, flew to Belgium in order to free a drug



dealer held in prison there. He convinced the Belgians to release him by claiming he was an undercover agent on duty at the time of his arrest.

Police investigators will examine the possibility that Dotan accepted a bribe from some source to intervene in the release... Later, Belgian police sent evidence to Israel that shed more light on the incident.

The drug dealer was none other than Aharon Weiner, arrested last year in a multi-million dollar purchase of 650 kg. of cocaine. Weiner is a close associate of Arie Deri and a chief suspect in Deri's bribe-taking schemes. One of the primary mysteries of Deri's crimes is where the alleged \$50 million in bribes he collected while Minister of the Interior between 1988-94 disappeared to. Early on in their investigations of Deri, the Israeli media followed a trail leading to Europe, drugs and money laundering. That trail withered away after Deri joined the government of Yitzhak Rabin and agreed to offer it the Shas Party's support for the "peace" process.

While Netanyahu suffocates on the noose of a separate Deri scandal, Israel police are following a scent, more of a stink, on a far fouler path. They are implying that the former Minister of the Police and his Director General accepted a bribe from Deri or a close supporter with an interest in keeping him in the government, to liberate a cocaine-selling henchman who got caught with his fingers in the stash in Belgium.

The Bar-On affair is definitely a scandal but this is a REAL scandal. And if the Likud was any kind of a party, and if Netanyahu was any kind of a man, they would expose the whole filthy business. But that would mean revealing the nastiest secrets of the "peace" process and the Rabin assassination causing the whole house of cards called the Israeli political system to tumble, then shatter into 120 infectious shards.

This Netanyahu cannot do. So the Israeli media will have its way, he will go and the tyranny of the "peace" camp will return to finally wreck the nation.

In Russia, aid groups find charity doesn't begin at home

By Richard Boudreaux

MOSCOW— Igor Donenko wants to prove that the new Russia has a soul. From a crumpled basement on the northeast edge of Moscow, he is struggling to revive the forgotten impulse of philanthropy.

A slight, intense, soft-spoken psychiatrist who wears jeans to work, Donenko rescues schizophrenic and manic-depressive patients from the poverty and prisonlike regimes of state mental hospitals.

He treats them with medication and a kinder therapy adapted from the West.

A dozen or more patients each day crowd his four-room basement to learn clerical skills, study English, socialize, exercise and cook lunch in a clubhouse atmosphere. About 200 have undergone treatment; nearly all function better, he says, and 30 have found jobs.

To finance this treatment, the 37-year-old doctor set up one of Russia's first post-Soviet charities, Human Soul Foundation, and appeals tirelessly to the consciences of the country's new rich. "You make money, and we help people," he tells them. "Let's be partners."

It's a hard sell. After a promising start, Human Soul and other private charities are hearing over more often from would-be donors, who face growing pressures and uncertainties in Russia's wild free market.

Philanthropy was prestigious here a century ago, when noblemen and wealthy merchants built hospitals and orphanages under the czar. Then the Communists erased the notion of noblesse oblige along with the nobility itself. Now the Communist substitute is gone: the state no longer takes care of everyone. Donenko is trying to

help fill the void. He's not alone. Since the Soviet Union's collapse more than five years ago, more than 4,000 private charities have sprung up across Russia to help the growing ranks of defenseless poor and disabled.

With start-up aid and advice from the West, the groups learned fund-raising techniques—from charity balls to direct mail—while winning legal status and tax exemptions from Russia's parliament.

By 1995, Donenko had 65 corporate contributors in Russia—enough, he hoped, to sustain and expand Human Soul after its two-year \$400,000 grant from the US Agency for International Development ran out last fall.

Then the bubble burst. Donenko is down to four contributors. \$8,000 in debt and facing cutbacks in his program.

What went wrong? Several things, according to Donenko and other charity organizers experiencing the same withdrawal.

For one, the Moscow mayor's office began strong-arming businesses to donate to official "charity" schemes, which have more to do with building monuments and restoring a giant cathedral than helping the needy.

Also, entrepreneurs never made a habit of charity. According to surveys, most have donated at least once,

but, unsure of Russia's political future, they avoid long-term commitments. After taking their initial donors for granted, "charities are realizing that raising money is full-time work," says Paul Legendre of Moscow's Charities Aid Foundation.

Finally, tax agents became more efficient at collecting ruinously high taxes, and racketeers became more ruthless in extorting protection money. As a matter of self-preservation, Russia's new rich lost the incentive to seek public recognition for doing good.

"It's not the best idea right now to call attention to your profits," says a Moscow industrialist. "If I want to help, I'll help my family, my friends, my circle. Quietly. I won't get involved in charity."

Human Soul itself has been burglarized, robbed of its phones, shaken down by its neighborhood godfather and offered police protection—for a bribe. Like its former donors, the charity has adopted a low profile: it no longer displays a nameplate on the door.

Donenko, ever the idealist, is undaunted. The foundation will try to limp along on modest grants from abroad, he says, and keep searching for donors at home.

"The motivation to do good is alive in some Russians, and there are others who need to be helped," he said. "The question is how to connect them. When the situation is more stable, people's logic will change, and our work will be easier."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Life in Russia has not changed but the lot of most people has worsened

'Swindlers or Schindlers list?'

Continued from page 4

that the story is untrue at the core. At a time in Hitler's Germany when every chicken, every piglet was registered and had to be accounted for by municipal livestock enumerators—and at a time when even pets were put on ration cards—would such an operation have been possible?" the source wondered.

In Nazi Germany, the source explained, "there was a regular animal and livestock census. If an emergency butchering had to take place or an animal was accidentally killed or diseased, each incident had to be reported to local authorities—down to the very last chicken. So the Schindlers must have been swindlers. The fictional 'facts' around this story have been fabricated from thin air. Most Christian Germans are concerned about the character development that seems to have been done in this Holocaust promotion lobby flick."

In *Gone with the Wind*, Margaret Mitchell, for example, took some liberties with Melly Wilkes' pregnancy—which, if you read the history book, lasted some 14 months in order to accommodate an extra battle between the North and South. Now this is clearly ludicrous. Of course that could not be. But does that invalidate the novel? That fine point slides right by because the characters are true. They are so true that they are palpable. The atmosphere is true. Whatever the characters do, whatever the ambience of the different chapters might be, the characters within this novel act within their nature and in the spirit of the times. This is not true of "Schindler's List."

Schindler is portrayed as an opportunistic, corrupt, devious, greedy, utterly contemptible German, who keeps triple sets of doctored business records, boozing it up, exploiting the war, betraying his country,

cutting shady deals right in a beautiful church and right with in earshot of other worshippers. The question then comes up: Who was this Schindler? Really? He lived. He is not just a character. We get some real-life glimpses from some interviews with his ex-wife whose name is Emilie, whom he left stranded in post-war Argentina with a big pile of debts, and who, according to press reports, to this day is supported by Jewish charity.

Reporter: "What do you think of your husband?" Emilie: "Look, I don't think of him."

And in another interview: "Schindler was a fool. He was a strange man."

"He was a hero to the Jews," she has said also. "Not to me. He was stupid. Useless. Half crazy. To hell with him."

Said Emilie, as she stood by her ex-husband's grave a few years later: "I felt nothing.

Nothing. Nothing."

Schindler died in the 1970s and was buried in Jerusalem. "This strange 'German'—otherwise corrupt down to his toes—was really just another member of the Tribe, fact which is withheld in this politically expedient, highly touted venture of soaking it yet one more time to the bedeviled Germans. The film may be a cinematic masterpiece, but is internally flawed," the source told Shanti RTV news agency. "Oskar Schindler shows all the attributes that are simplistically attributed by red-neck anti-Semites to the Jews—often to our embarrassment, for things are not that simple, and should not be in an artistic piece meriting approbation and respect."

"The 'German-Nazi Party' golden-pin-wearing Schindler is lazy, crooked, cheats on his wife, doctors his books, wheels and deals in a church—a scene which comes right out of the

"Eternal Jew" where Nazis showed the Jews in an unflattering light carrying on business deals in the synagogue while the cantor sings up front—a piece of work that has been criticized as being too simplistic," the source explained. "There is discord. It comes from the broad brush portrayal that the only people in the film who are kind, just, noble, dedicated, benign and selfless are the Jews. Schindler the villain has none of these McGuffey Readers qualities. Schindler the profligate 'redeems' himself by saving Jews—that is his only saving grace. The character lacks depth. If it is claimed that anti-Semites always caricature Jews, then anti-German Spielberg in 'Schindler's List' has merely reversed the stereotypes," the source concluded.

Shanti RTV news

AROUND TOWN

Successful Tourist Week Cyprus

● The First Cyprus Tourism Week continued its activities in the Forte Grand Hotel marking the start of a prosperous era between Jordan and Cyprus, said the Regional director of Cyprus Airlines in Jordan and Palestine, Mr Awil Madaen. The week is sponsored by the committee to activate tourism in Cyprus. This is in co-operation with the Forte Grand, Cyprus Airlines and Meridian Hotel in Lemosoul. The Cyprus delegation is headed by Mr Cleanthis Nofitis, director of Cyprus Tourism Organization. Guests were introduced to traditional music by the Cyprus Folklore Group. Cypriot chefs were specially flown in to serve delicious cuisine from that inviting land.



14th Arab Music Academy Conference

Arabic music finds listening ears at home

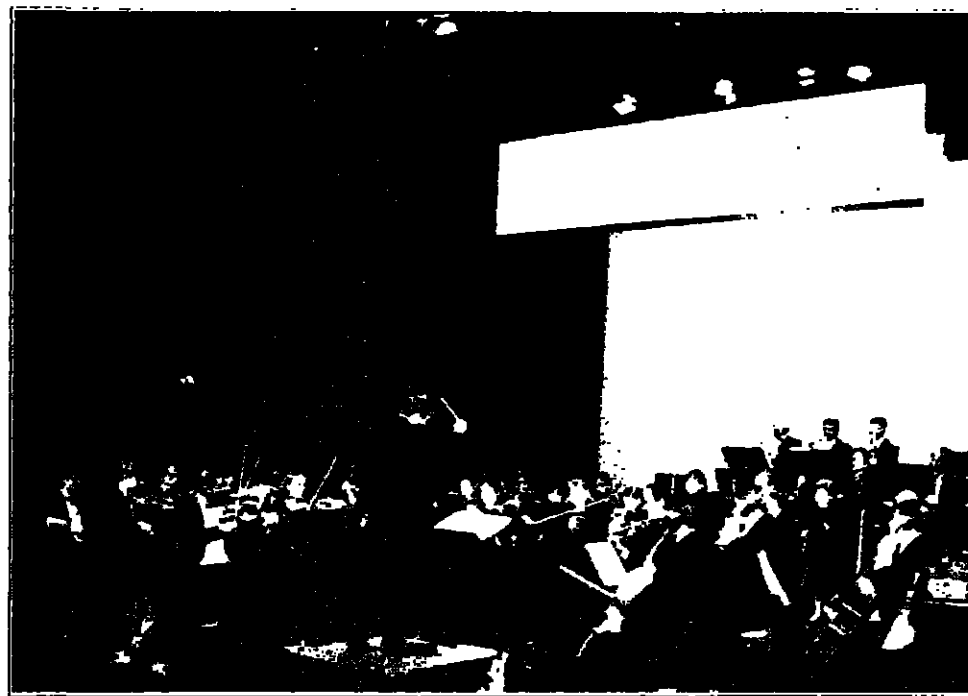
By Munther Hamdan
Special to The Star

A bid to further Arab coordination in the field of music, the 14th Arab Academy conference and Second Music Rostrom was held from 3 to 5 March in Amman under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein. Taking place at the Royal Cultural Center and including a number of musical concerts and lectures, the event is considered to be among the most important activities organized by the National Music Conservatory (NMC) of Noor Al Hussein Foundation.

The three-day event, held in cooperation with Jordan's Ministry of Culture and the International Music Council of UNESCO, focused on the elements of Arabic music and their historical significance. Participating in the conference was a large number of Arab music experts and members of the Arab Music Academy. Those included from Algiers, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon and Libya.

The opening ceremony was a real show of music performed by professionals and local talents. After speeches delivered by the Minister of Culture Mr Ahmed Al Qadab, Munir Bashir, secretary of the Arab Music Academy and Kifah Fakhouri, the head of the conservatory, the NMC's orchestra presented its creativity playing a set of genuine Arabic musical pieces.

The orchestra presented two musical pieces. The first was the "Al Maawel" (Spades) by Tawfik Al Basha and the Al Qamh (Wheat) by the late Egyptian singer and composer Muhammad Abd Al Wahhab. Then came then on stage the brilliant oud player Sakher Hattar along with his Arab music band playing traditional tunes. Al Maawashah had their fair share in the concert as six girls of the



The NMC's orchestra led by Murtada during Monday's performance

NMC led by the conductor Hafez Al Ashi sang "Ya Man Laebat Behi Shamoulun" and "Qamar Luh Layali". Al Ashi himself sang Um Kalthoum's "Hikayat Hub" (A Love Story), a song composed by the renowned Egyptian composer Baligh Hamdi. Naser Irshaid, the Jordanian singer who has won recently the golden Microphone prize in Bahrain, dazzled the audience with his "Kait Ughanni (How come I sing), a song written by

the Jordanian poet Ali Al Bateeri. With Zahrat Al Madaen (The Rose of Cities), the famous nationalistic song dedicated to Jerusalem, Qamar Badwan, a Jordanian young and talented singer, concluded the ceremony.

Badwan, 19, said that she started playing the organ before she received her training at Freddy for Music. "I got a scholarship from the NMC to study music. I am now working on a cassette of an Egyptian production that

includes a number of songs composed by Wael and Ghazi Al Sharqawi and written by Mustafa Al Tibi and Tareq Al Muhandes.

On the same day, the NMC's orchestra gave a thrilling concert at the main theater of the RCC. They were led by the Jordanian conductor Rida Murtada who made his debut there and then. A Jordan born in 1975, he was musically trained in Germany. As well as conducting, he plays the violin and piano.

The concert was in two parts. In the first part the audience listened to Mozart's Overture to the Marriage of Figaro and the Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra accompanied by the Jordanian pianist Hana Malhas. The latter symphony is an achievement by the Jordanian young composer Saad Haddad.

The second part was wholly devoted to Beethoven's Symphony No.2 with its three movements. (Adagio Molto-Allegro Con Brio, Larghetto and Allegro Molto). The audience were given the chance to experience Beethoven's wild and turbulent music.

Musical patterns and their performing styles in the Arab countries was the title of the first seminar on the program's agenda. The participants highlighted the variety with which the Arabic music is performed in Arab countries citing examples on some of these patterns.

Talking about the general features of the Arabic Music, Mr Elia Francis from Lebanon said that the Arabic language and soul in addition to the local environment of each musical style within the Arab countries are two main elements that contributed to the development of this kind of music.

The second seminar, held on Wednesday and titled "Rhythms of Arabic Music", highlighted the local environment's impact on producing diverse rhythms for Arabic music. ■

Celebrant Singers Choir for peace

By Anca de Maio
Special to The Star

It is not everyday we are introduced to such a special kind of music. Last Saturday evening, the North American group, Celebrant Singers, played and interpreted songs of peace, rest and assurance for a Jordanian audience at the Marriott Hotel.

Organized and sponsored by Freddy for Music in collaboration with the Marriott Hotel, the choir's first performance in Amman offered an interesting cultural and musical experience to the Jordanian public.

The Celebrant Singers is one of seven Jon Stemkoski's choirs that perform 350 to 400 recitals in about 30 countries every year.

As a full-time activity, each 25-member group travel 11 months a year and reach out night after night all over the world with their heartfelt repertoire of hymns and spiritual songs. This year alone the Celebrant Singers, directed by Mr David Dick, performed in Sri Lanka, Vietnam, China, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan.

In Amman they have also sung at the College de la Salle, at the Baptist School and

Church, in the Alliance Church and the Assemblies of God Church.

Their next scheduled stops are Cyprus, Lebanon and Armenia. They have sung in front of Pope John-Paul II at the Vatican and for Mother Teresa.

"We are a non-profit group made up of people from very different backgrounds that volunteer to sing together," explained Mr Dick. "Each of us decided one day to pack everything up and go to sing God's love throughout the world," he continued. "I personally joined the group seven years ago."

"The present formation counts people from all over the United States including Canada. Travelling and living together, we have come to know and love each other like in a big harmonious family," he added.

The 10 singers, the instrument players, the sound machines technicians, the signer for the hard of hearing, under the direction of Mr Dick, touched the audience with their sincere feelings and artistic mastery. "There are few professionals among us actually, but our team work is very serious and implies constant

training and improvement," underlined the director.

Their thematically compact repertoire consists of a collection of very old hymns and negro spirituals that have been rearranged and modernized as well as songs written by people in the Stemkoski organization.

The original compositions of the Stemkoski's 20-year organization are recorded in a new album every two years. Dick told The Star.

According to one of the soloists, the latest cassette of the Celebrant Singers is the top expression of their work and bears as title the name of a song whose words and music are signed by Jon Stemkoski himself: "His love is holding you." Selling cassettes and discs is one of the self-subsiding sources of the group, she said.

The Celebrant Singers ended their show with a standing ovation from the elated audience. "It was a pleasure for everybody to hear them sing so clearly about the word of God," concluded Mr Freddy Danou. Expressing his gratitude and satisfaction, he concluded: For almost two hours, "we were in Heaven" ■

Abu Shakra Trading Agency introduces Eau Parfumee Extreme from Bvlagari

Mr Rami Abu Shakra, general manager of Abu Shakra Trading Agency introduces the new fragrance Eau Parfumee Extreme from Bvlagari.

Green tea leaves, known for their medicinal and beneficial effects are the source of the base note in the Bvlagari's first cologne.

Eau Parfumee Extreme, launched in 1992, is delicate and discreet, yet it has a lively and citrusy scent of green tea. This cologne for men and women, sold exclusively in Bvlagari boutiques for the last few years and now in the leading perfumeries world-wide, was acclaimed by consumers, winning prestigious International awards. It was named "Fragrance of the Year" in the US, "Eurobest" in the United Kingdom and "Coup de Coeur" in France. Sharon Stone, the decade's most sensu-



suous star, admitted to "wanting to bathe in Eau Parfumee."

Eau Parfumee Extreme completes the classic Eau Parfumee line in this new version dedicated to the men and women

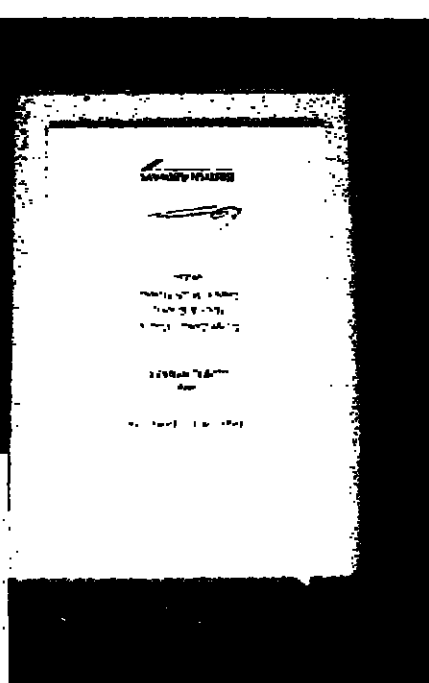
who love fresh colognes, who yearn for a profound physical and psychological well-being, and who use scents to achieve pleasure and serene fulfillment. ■

Taybet Zaman wins British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award

A VILLAGE resort near Petra is the global winner of the 1996 British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award. The Taybet Zaman Village Hotel and Resort beat off competition from more than 100 projects world-wide to take this prestigious prize. The project is designed to allow tourists greater insight into local Arab culture and, at the same time, to benefit the community.

Northern Ireland's Lakeland Country Breaks scooped the UK award proving that, despite its problems, the region's tourism is alive and kicking. Lakeland Country Breaks won with their commitment to fostering tourism in rural areas for the benefit of the community and visitors.

The British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Awards recognize any organization involved in the tourism industry that has taken steps to conserve their local heritage or environment. At London's at Hampton Court Palace, Judith Chalmers, Sir Colin Marshall and David Bellamy hosted the ceremony and announced the winners ■



Tourism for Tomorrow

BRITISH AIRWAYS

Jordan Season to prove great spinner for tourists

IN THE wake of the "Jordan Season in Paris" that opens on 11 March and inaugurated by HM Queen Noor and Mrs Bernadette Chirac, over 50 French travel agents toured Jordan in the past week. They were invited to the Kingdom by the Ministry of Tourism and the Jordan Tourism Board.

Mr Ziad Dakkak, general manager of Dakkak Tours said 50 French travel agents toured Jordan to give them first hand information about the Kingdom and what it can offer foreign tourists.

It is hoped that through such promotional campaigns can attract more and more tourists especially from France and Europe would make Jordan as their holiday destination.

All travel agents in Jordan are coordinating their efforts with the Ministry of Tourism to make the Jordan Season in Paris a great success. Representatives of these

local hotels will be present in France at the time of the opening.

Dakkak says that his travel agency has been promoting Jordan to French tourists as early as 1995.

Dakkak Tours are concentrating on French tourists from all walks of life as well as group tours from the professions as well as students.

The marketing campaign during the Jordan season will definitely attract lots of French tourists and will in turn contribute to the national economy, Dakkak said. ■



Dakkak

SCRAPBOOK

By Osama El-Sherif

The 'photoless' Afghans

AFGHANISTAN'S TALIBAN movement is eagerly striding back into the dark ages—and making headway. In a latest of a series of idiotic edicts, the Kabul government announced that it was renewing an earlier ban on photography, or publishing photographs, of living things. That includes every living thing that flies, walks, crawls, slithers or swims. Why? Because the fundamentalist movement believes taking photographs of living beings is against the Islamic Sharia. That, of course, is not only wrong, but stupid as well.

But since the Taliban are in control—for the time being—the ban should be taken seriously.

The Afghans, not known to be avid amateur photographers, may not feel the brunt of this ban. They have been busy shooting each other with real guns for the last five years. So I don't think many will protest not being able to take pictures of camel caravans strolling indifferently under the blistering sun, or of sheep huddling together in the winter evenings, or of people haggling over the price of chicken in the Friday market.

They will be allowed, however, to take pictures of inanimate objects: stark and dreary mountains, towering unharnessed rivers, blown up buildings, burnt fields and deserted villages.

The ban applies to foreign journalists covering the interminable war in that country. They will have to settle for pictures of charred tanks, downed MIGs and collapsing bridges. But not of Mujahideen fighters, armed to the teeth, shooting at anything that moves—and not with a camera either.

If my hunch is right, there is a black market in Afghanistan for everything the government has banned so far: alcohol, western music, transistor radios and who knows: even pictures of real human beings!

But imagine the cost of such a ban on the lives of ordinary Afghans. First, they will be issued with photoless passports and identity cards. Their newspapers will contain many blank boxes with captions that read something like: "Imagine in this space our beloved prime minister meeting a UN envoy yesterday at the City Hall to discuss food shipments." Or, the paper would run a picture of the room where the two men had met, showing inanimate objects only like furniture, walls, ceiling, carpets and ashtrays.

Children will not watch cartoons on TV and the family will not gather in front of the box to watch a game of football or a drama series. In fact Afghan TV will probably spend a fortune on thousands of feet of National Geographic documentaries, minus the exciting scenes of wildlife in action, and keep the ones of oceans, mountains and barren deserts.

The Taliban ban was issued as this century comes to a close. The Taliban will not find supporters of their version of Islam even in the most strict and orthodox countries. But if they are so literal in their interpretation of Islam, I wonder why they haven't started with God's most clear commandments: to respect and preserve human life, to show compassion towards each other and to make peace with their enemies.

These are the same people who banned women from working and little girls from going to school. The Taliban, with their inanimate ideas and upside-down view of the world, are bringing a scourge on Afghanistan that is worse than all the evils that visited their country in the past two decades. ■

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Oh my God! It's Yvonne!"

THE STAR
Tel. 652380 - 645380

Le Jourdain

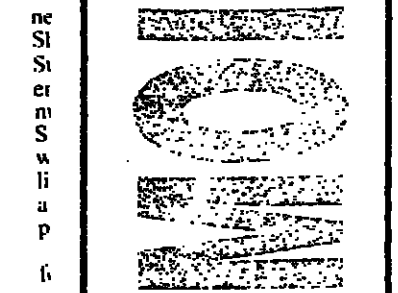
Supplément en français du Star

La pression monte autour de Jérusalem

Le Premier ministre israélien Benjamin Netanyahou a ordonné à la police de fermer hier quatre institutions palestiniennes opérant à Jérusalem-est. «Nous ne demandons pas à l'Autorité palestinienne si elle est prête ou non à fermer ses bureaux, nous le ferons nous-mêmes» a déclaré le chef du gouvernement israélien (notre photo). La fermeture de ces institutions est réclamée par des députés de la majorité de droite au pouvoir. L'Autorité palestinienne a démenti de son côté que ces institutions dépendent d'elle. Les médias israéliens ont cité ces derniers mois parmi les institutions menacées de fermeture un office des statistiques, un bureau du cadastre, une antenne de l'agence de presse palestinienne Wafa, un centre de recherches sur l'énergie, un service cartographique et un centre d'aide aux prisonniers. Cette annonce de Benjamin Netanyahou est intervenue au moment où les travaux d'arpentage sur le site où doit être construit un nouveau quartier juif à Jérusalem-est devaient commencer. La création d'un onzième quartier juif de colonisation, appelé Har Homa, dans la partie arabe de la Ville Sainte, a été dénoncée par la communauté internationale et par le président palestinien Yasser Arafat qui veut faire de Jérusalem-est la capitale du futur Etat palestinien qu'il appelle de tous ses vœux.



SECON



Chaque fois qu'un coup de vent souffle pendant les nuits froides de notre pays oriental, je pense à Paris en rêvant de m'y trouver. Je me remémore les promenades au bord de la Seine et toute la liberté que les accompagnants. Tous mes souvenirs remontent alors à la surface, et je me souviens, comme si j'étais amoureux.

Presque chaque jour, la même question revient. Pourquoi est-on obligé de souffrir toute notre vie alors que d'autres peuvent jouir de tous leurs droits en toute liberté? Pourquoi doit-on subir tous ces malheurs, toutes ces contrariétés qui compliquent nos vies?

Il est peut-être difficile de se rendre compte à quel point tout un tas de petits détails sont si éternels et si gênants dans nos vies quotidiennes, à l'intérieur d'une société traditionnelle. Et il est encore plus révoltant de se dire que les choses pourraient être plus simples, mais ne le sont pas.

Comment faire pour supporter une société où l'on doit batailler pour faire ses courses, remplir des papiers ou envoyer des lettres? Ces milliers de petites tracasseries, on ne cesse de les supporter jour et nuit.

Certains décident alors de partir, d'autres préférant rester sans arrêter de se plaindre. La seule chose qui semble ne pas s'éteindre, chez les uns comme chez les autres, est l'espoir que quelque chose finisse par changer.

Cet espoir ressurgit de temps à autre, grâce à certains événements. Ainsi, le fait de voir plusieurs milliers de personnes se rassembler voilà quelques jours sous les fenêtres du bureau du Premier ministre Abdul Karim Kabarti n'était pas un événement ordinaire. Il n'est pas habituel de voir le chef du gouvernement en discussion avec le président du syndicat des ingénieurs, lui promettant de résoudre tous les problèmes. Une manifestation qui n'a débouché sur aucune répression, aucune arrestation.

C'est probablement ce type d'événement qui renforce notre attachement à notre pays. Car il fait naître en nous l'espoir de changements.

d'amélioration, de progrès. S'enfuir pourrait être certes une solution plus facile pour obtenir ces changements. Mais comment les problèmes pourraient être résolus si tous ceux qui réclament des changements décident de quitter le pays.

Et où peut-on retrouver cette occasion de participer au mouvement de réforme, en demandant l'application de nouvelles lois pour faire évoluer la société? Comment pourrait-on vivre dans une société étrangère qui nous priverait de toutes ces joies que nous procure le mouvement de réforme?

J'ai effectivement parfois envie d'acheter un billet d'avion et de quitter le pays. Mais la souffrance semble être devenue une drogue qui m'empêche de partir.

Sa'eda Kilani

Le Jourdain, on y revient.
Tous les jeudis dans le Star
645 380

Syndicats

Un règlement unifié qui divise

Pour la majorité des syndicats ouvriers de Jordanie, l'application d'un règlement unifié est contraire à la liberté syndicale. Une mesure qui figure dans la nouvelle loi du travail adoptée voilà huit mois par le Parlement jordanien.

La décision prise

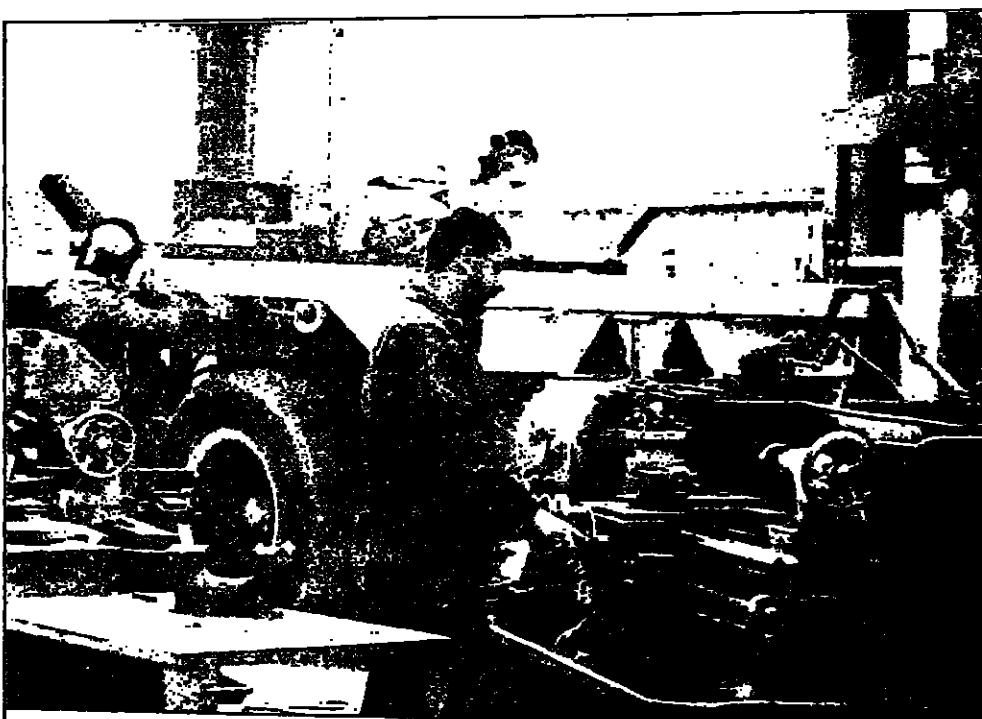
Le 22 février dernier par le Comité central de la Fédération générale des Travailleurs jordaniens (FGTJ) au sujet du «règlement unifié des syndicats» semble avoir mis fin à un conflit inter-syndical qui durait depuis cinq mois.

Tout a commencé par l'adoption au Parlement de la nouvelle loi du travail en juin dernier. L'article 100 de cette loi implique l'élaboration par la direction de la FGTJ d'un règlement unifié qui sera imposé aux 17 syndicats ouvriers membres de la Fédération. Huit de ces syndicats se sont opposés à ce diktat, car, jusqu'à présent, chaque syndicat adoptait son propre règlement par la biais de son assemblée générale.

Pour défendre leur position, les opposants avançaient des arguments solides qui mettaient la direction de la Fédération dans l'embarras. Parmi ces arguments, le fait que l'existence des syndicats membres est antérieure à la nouvelle loi. Un argument reconnu par cette nouvelle loi elle-même, dans l'article 101. Et l'article 110 de cette loi du travail reconnaît lui que les «syndicats conservent leurs droits acquis».

De plus, il s'agit là de mesures touchant au droit de liberté syndicale, et non simplement à l'organisation syndicale. Notons à cet égard que les deux conventions internationales relatives à ce droit n'ont jamais été ratifiées par le gouvernement jordanien, malgré les appels incessants de l'Organisation internationale du Travail depuis quinze ans.

Selon Salem Hijazine, président du syndicat des travailleurs du domaine de la santé et chef de file des opposants au



Huit des 17 syndicats ouvriers jordaniens se sont élevés contre l'application d'un règlement unifié à l'ensemble des syndicats.

règlement unifié, les syndicats devront, en vertu de ce règlement, présenter leurs revendications d'abord à la FGTJ, docile vis-à-vis du gouvernement, avant de mener toute action revendicative auprès des patrons. «C'est une disposition insensée», proteste-t-il. «C'est toute l'indépendance des syndicats qui est en jeu».

La justice devrait trancher

Au cours des derniers mois, le risque de scissions au sein de la Fédération était grand. Des déclarations menaçantes en ce sens ont été faites par plusieurs représentants de

l'opposition. Mais, finalement, le courant de la sagesse et de la modération a prévalu.

Au cours de la réunion du 22 février dernier, la direction de la FGTJ a approuvé une bonne partie des critiques formulées à l'encontre du règlement unifié. Des modifications ont eu lieu et celui-ci a donc été adopté à la majorité. Mais un point de litige persiste tout de même: l'assemblée générale de chaque syndicat a-t-elle le droit ou non d'adopter son propre règlement?

Les opposants ont insisté pour que ce point de litige figure sur le procès-verbal de cette fameuse réunion. Pour

eux, il revient désormais à la justice de trancher pour savoir s'ils pourront préserver ou non leur liberté d'action. Et ils devraient prochainement entamer une action au près de la Cour suprême de justice.

Suleiman Sweiss

Economie

Un ambitieux projet arabe

Les membres de la Ligue arabe se sont engagés à réaliser une zone arabe de libre-échange d'ici dix ans. Un projet ambitieux, mais difficile.

Avec ou sans Israël

Malgré les projets axés sur la Méditerranée, ou le Moyen-Orient, les économies arabes doivent mieux coopérer et surtout au niveau de leurs échanges commerciaux. Jordaniens, Syriens ou Palestiniens possèdent des économies trop peu développées pour ériger des barrières entre eux. Il est au contraire dans l'intérêt de tous les pays arabes de la région de coopérer, sans parler de ceux qui sont plus éloignés comme le Maroc ou le Yémen.

L'état actuel de la coopération inter-arabe n'est pas bon. En fait, si la zizanie n'existe pas, c'est grâce à M. Netanyahou et au front de protestation qu'il a su déclencher depuis son élection.

Dans le domaine du Tourisme ou du Commerce, les échanges restent très limités. En fait, le commerce inter-arabe ne représente que 10% du commerce total des 22 pays membres de la Ligue arabe. Dans le passé, les raisons expliquant ce faible chiffre étaient évidentes. D'une part, il existait un manque de compatibilité entre des économies qui proposaient les mêmes produits, et d'autre part, de fortes tensions politiques empêchaient ces échanges.

Il s'agit aujourd'hui de savoir si tout cela peut changer. Sans montrer trop d'optimisme, on peut se réjouir de la réunion qui a rassemblé voilà deux semaines au Caire les ministres

de l'Economie des pays arabes. Un plan a été adopté visant à faire tomber les barrières économiques freinant la coopération arabe. Le but est de concrétiser d'ici dix ans un projet de zone arabe de libre-échange économique. Ce projet vise à éliminer progressivement les barrières douanières existant entre les 22 pays arabes. Un projet qui se conformerait bien sûr aux réglementations de l'Organisation mondiale du Commerce (OMC).

Une telle initiative n'est pas vraiment nouvelle. En fait, il existe depuis 1981 une convention visant à favoriser le développement des échanges commerciaux arabes. Mais il se posait à l'époque les problèmes de la guerre froide entre la plupart des pays arabes et l'Egypte, les Egyptiens ayant refusé de ratifier cet accord.

Aujourd'hui, la création d'une zone de libre-échange est devenue une nécessité pour les économies arabes en raison de la globalisation de l'économie

mondiale. Pour pouvoir traiter avec les grands blocs économiques mondiaux, les économies arabes doivent se rapprocher et ouvrir collectivement. Il est nécessaire de développer les capacités du monde arabe pour qu'il puisse s'associer sur une base paritaire avec d'autres pays et traiter d'égal à égal. Lors de la première réunion ministérielle de l'OMC qui s'est récemment tenue à Singapour, une telle coopération a manqué aux pays arabes pour défendre leurs intérêts.

Au cours des dernières années, la Jordanie a enregistré une augmentation de son commerce avec ses voisins arabes (cf tableau des importations et exportations). Une tendance qui doit encourager l'établissement de cette zone de libre-échange, avec cette fois la participation de l'Egypte, pays-clé pour le succès de ce projet.

Riad al-Khoury
MEBA S.A.R.L.

| | Importations jor. | | | Exportations jor. | | |
|-------------|-------------------|------|-------|-------------------|------|-------|
| | 1994 | 1995 | 1996* | 1994 | 1995 | 1996* |
| Pays arabes | 531 | 609 | 634 | 337 | 452 | 397 |
| Union euro. | 838 | 859 | 818 | 41 | 63 | 71 |
| Etats-Unis | 233 | 241 | 271 | 9 | 15 | 12 |
| Japon | 94 | 91 | 108 | 13 | 13 | 10 |

*pour les mois de janvier à octobre

Chanson

Un récital de fraîcheur et de bien-être

Sur invitation du Centre Culturel et de Coopération Linguistique d'Amman et de l'Association des Diplômés des Universités et Instituts français, la chanteuse Française Le Golvan a amené en Jordanie un magnifique bouquet de chansons populaires françaises qu'elle a offert aux publics d'Amman et d'Irbid.

Accompagnée

par François Verli, pianiste et percussionniste de jazz, la chanteuse Française Le Golvan est montée sur les scènes du Centre Culturel Royal et de l'Université du Yarmouk pour y interpréter ses chansons avec l'esprit, la décontraction et l'humour qui la définissent comme une véritable comédienne de la chanson.

«J'ai toujours voulu faire du théâtre, mais le hasard, ou la chance, a fait que la chanson s'imposait obstinément, me déviant à chaque fois de mon rêve initial», raconte Françoise. «J'ai fait mes débuts en 1982 à Paris comme chanteuse de rue, en répondant à une petite annonce qui disait: accordéoniste cherche chanteuse pour répertoire allant de Piaf à Renaud».

La découverte de «trésors» dans des partitions et interprétations datant de la fin du siècle dernier et du début du 20ème. L'âge d'or du café-concert, avec Theresa (1837-1913), Yvette Guilbert (1865-1943) et ceux d'après 1900. Drame, Paulus, Polin, Oustrard, Arletty, l'a amené à goûter à cette tradition si riche et si nécessaire dans l'initiation d'une chanteuse populaire.

Beaux dans leur simplicité et leur théâtralité, les morceaux qu'elle met à son répertoire conviennent également à son talent dramatique et à sa philosophie de la vie: «Je cherche à mettre de la poésie et de l'âme dans le quotidien et dans les petites choses, j'essaie de trouver des espaces de beauté dans un geste, dans un mot, dans un regard. C'est ma façon de me relier au monde».

En découvrant l'esthétique de l'insignifiant et de l'anodin.

Françoise Le Golvan récupère dans un répertoire semi-réaliste la beauté originelle des textes qu'on n'entend plus aujourd'hui à cause de leur normalité émue. Elle chante les «petits maux» d'un doigt ou d'un pied, et les joies joviennes en se gargarisant avec professionnalisme des banalités à la fois belles et quasi-absurdes.

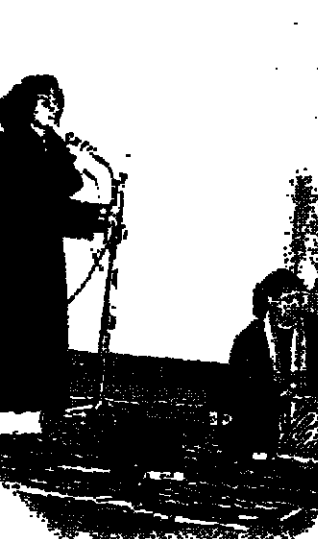
Elle transpose en musique des dialogues et des histoires plus qu'ordinaires en les accompagnant d'une surprenante mélodie marquée par des pauses ou des accents irréguliers, ainsi que par des avalanches inopinées de rimes originales, comme dans sa propre composition *Mel-Léo*.

Mettant de côté la musique des notes pour quelques instants, elle récite la chanson *Essai* du chanteur de Jacques Audoubert. Et malgré son absence apparente, la musique est quand même là, celle des mots.

Elle traduit en français un vers d'une chanson traditionnelle de Bretagne, avant de l'interpréter en breton, en répétant des formules magiques comme «Son an ankou» sur une musique troublante et sensuelle. Elle sait chanter aussi par le regard, pendant que l'histoire se laisse lire sur son visage, silencieusement, avant d'éclater verbalement: *Dans la fumée tout s'en va*.

Ses chansons se nourrissent de l'invention et de

l'improvisation. «Le travail en duo est difficile dans le sens qu'il demande une application approfondie et un synchronisme des idées, des phrases, et des mots», affirme François Verli. «Mais c'est aussi un nouveau dialogue imprévu qu'on engage à chaque fois. Nous nous sommes connus voilà deux ans dans un



contexte de musique improvisée», ajoute-t-il. «Et c'est dans le jazz actuel qu'on a trouvé tous les deux le goût pour la réplique du moment». La chanteuse *Echo*, signée Golvan et Verli, invite à une expérience unique: «Laissez-vous glisser sur les mots». Eux-mêmes se laissent glisser avec désinvolture sur les articulations des phrases, sur les rythmes des tablas hindoues, et sur les notes qui s'appellent et se répondent au gré de leurs envies.

Selon sa propre définition, «Golvan, chansons populaires

très choisies et d'invention, genre air de rien, accorde-toi dans les descentes», le spectateur est encouragé à lâcher prise et à se laisser porter par les mots, qu'ils soient prononcés, chuchotés, sifflés ou chantés. Le public francophone jordanien a très bien réagi pendant cette aventure qu'il a acceptée avec beaucoup de confiance dès la première chanson, *La vie en rose* d'Edith Piaf. Les vers «Il me dit des mots d'amour, des mots de tous les jours» contiennent les moindres du spectacle.

Entre les chansons, la comédienne aux yeux pétillants et à la démarche de Charlot étonné raconte des anecdotes diversifiées. Dans ce type de représentation, «on mise beaucoup sur l'humour et sur la complicité avec le public», affirme Françoise Le Golvan. Pour se sentir plus proche des gens, elle descend dans la salle comme les chanteuses populaires dans les cafés d'antan. «On est là pour causer, pour être ensemble», dit-elle. Avec un sujet de prédilection, l'amour.

Pour Françoise Le Golvan, la musique échappe aux modes et aux carcans trop étroits. Elle se nourrit de spontanéité et de surprise. Le but de sa recherche d'artiste complète - chanteuse et comédienne - se réduit simplement à «un plus de vie». A Amman et à Irbid, la formule a fonctionné et le contact a été établi. Le récital Golvan-Verli? Un air de fraîcheur et une sensation de bien-être.

Anca de Maio

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle «Les enfants au cinéma».
Le 10 mars à 20h30 au CCCL, *Après la guerre*, de Jean-Loup Hubert (1988).

Exposition

Muhammed Ali Shalir, à partir du 10 mars au CCCL. En s'inspirant de la calligraphie dans ses œuvres, cet artiste aboutit à un style bien particulier né de la lutte entre d'un côté la lettre et la couleur, et de l'autre le style et les mouvements modernes.

Le Jourdain, la section en français du Star, consacrera un supplément spécial le 20 mars à la saison jordanienne qui débutera prochainement à Paris. Des exemplaires de ce supplément seront distribués en France. Un moyen exceptionnel de faire de la publicité hors des frontières pour votre entreprise. Pour tous renseignements, contactez Olivier Bras ou Mahmoud Fares au 645 380 ou au 652 380.

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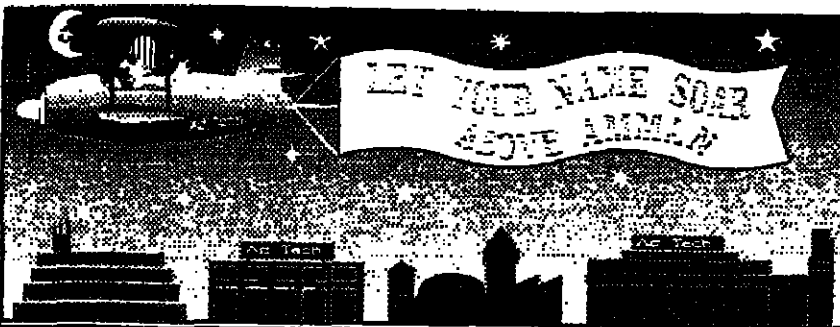
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Activities

| | | | |
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| Royal Cultural Centre | 6610247 | Concord Cinema | 677420 |
| American Centre Library | 820101 | Plaza Cinema | 692328 |
| British Council | 6361478 | Philadelpia Cinema | 634144 |
| French Cultural Centre | 637009 | | |
| Goethe Institute | 641993 | | |
| Cervantes Institute (Spanish) | 610858 | | |
| Turkish Cultural Centre | 639777 | | |
| Haya Arts Centre | 665195 | | |
| Y.W.C.A. | 641793 | | |
| Y.W.M.C.A. | 664251 | | |
| Alia Art Gallery | 643252 | | |
| Badna Art Gallery | 639303 | | |
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| Royal Shooting Club | 736572 |
| Royal Chess Club | 673713 |
| Royal Racing Club | 09-801233 |
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| Awqaf & Islamic Affairs | 666141 | Planning | 644466 |
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THE STAR'S WORKSTATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NOTES

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies

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The big companies, become Internet Service Providers: If you can't beat'em, join'em

By Jawad Abbassi
Special to The Star

NOT LONG ago, major companies in the telephone and communications business were at odds with the Internet Service Providers. The reasons for conflict were many: ISPs' subscribers pushed up the average length of local—and usually free—phone calls and the telephone operators had to accommodate such rises by investing in more switches, without any expense incurred by the ISPs.

Also, the Internet phone, which allows two Internet users anywhere in the world to make a voice call over the Internet, posed a new threat to the lucrative international phone calls business.

At one point the big telephone operators in the United States were demanding to impose regulations on the Internet phone to safeguard against such "free riding" by Internet subscribers.

However, it seems there has been a change of times and attitudes. The very telephone services operators who attacked the ISPs for their unjust snatching of forced subsidies from them, have taken huge steps towards becoming ISPs themselves. The examples of AT&T, Sprint and France Telecom manifest this remarkable change. AT&T, the US's largest telephone service operator, started offering free Internet service with free copies of Netscape to everyone who used AT&T long distance services. Following its move

AT&T reportedly became the largest ISP in the US within a week's time. AT&T will start charging its subscribers a little amount of money for Internet connection and, hence, it is poised to have a very profitable Internet business.

In France, France Telecom also appears to be following AT&T's path in response to



the 51 percent of the project. The joint venture's total investment reached \$2,000,000 according to Mr Imad Ayoub, Global One/Sprint Jordan's general manager.

Furthermore, AT&T, again in cooperation with a local Jordanian partner called First Telecom, has secured a license to operate an Internet service in Jordan with announced plans to offer the service later this year.

These two joint ventures with multinationals will be competing with national ISP licenses, that are wholly owned by Jordanians.

GlobalOne/Sprint Jordan is making headway in its third world Internet endeavor, according to Pyramid Research, a subsidiary of the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Global One has secured four contracts to provide Internet services in the four African nations of Botswana, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Nigeria.

The contracts, with a value of more than \$5 million, will include delivering the necessary hardware, software, operation and marketing of the services in addition to the interconnection to Global One's international Internet connection service, Global IP.

Moving to the Arab World, Global One has signed a contract in late 1996 with Oman's General Telecommunications Organization to provide Internet services through a turnkey solution valued at \$450,000. Oman's GTO expects to serve some 3,000 subscribers within

the first year of the project operation. The moves of these multinationals towards providing Internet services makes the increase of the Internet usage on a global scale a matter of time. These companies' quick adaptation to the Internet and their successful entry into the global market should provide a lesson for other telephone service operators around the world.

When, one may wonder, could we expect the Jordan Telecommunications Co. (JTC) to adapt to these changes? That's one issue which the JTC should be seriously considering.

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Amman gears up for a huge computing & IT event: American Computer Show 97

THE AMERICAN Computer Show '97, organized by the American Embassy in Amman, opens next week at the Philadelphia Hotel on 12 March and runs till the evening of 14 March.

What makes this show such an exciting and important event is its sheer size, which positions it as the second largest computer and information technology event in Jordan, after the Middle East Technology Show (METS), with some 30 participants. The idea behind the show is to bring together Jordanian local dealers and distributors of American computer and information technology products.

Participating companies include Access, Applied Technical Services (ATS), Arabia.On.Line, ARAMEX, Arabist, Arabian Office Automation (AOA), Armouh Investment Co., Al Rai newspaper, Business Optimization Consultants (BOC), BYTE Middle East magazine, Computer Applications & Technical Services (CATS), Computer Networking Services (CNS), General Computers & Electronics (GCE), Ideal Group, Ideal Systems, Mirage Information Technology Group (MIG), Magnet, Modern Information Systems Design (MISD), Modern Systems & Computer Trade, National Equipment & Technical Services (NETS), Jordan Mobile Telephone Services (FastLink), Global One/Sprint Jordan, Integrated Business Services (IBS), Jordan Microtech, Jordan Radio Paging (JRP), Sinam Integrated Systems (SIS), Smart Systems, Specialized Technical Services (STS), Special Systems Co. (SSC) and Tantash Informa-

tion Systems Group (TISG). Of these companies the sponsors include Access, ARAMEX, Al Rai newspaper, Armouh Investment Co. (McDonalds), BYTE Middle East, Mirage Information Technology Group (MIG), Global One/Sprint Jordan and FastLink.

The show will offer all the latest hardware and software products to arrive from the US market and you can expect to find many attractive deals, all under one roof.

Show hours on Thursday 10 and Friday 11, March will be from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm, then from 4.00 pm to 11 pm.

If you're a computer and technology fan, or simply interested in finding out what technology can do for you, don't miss it. ■

News update

Intel Pentium MMX is here

There's an enhanced Pentium processor, from Intel, and its beginning to appear in PC systems. The enhanced processor is called the Pentium P55C, and includes a new technology known as MMX. MMX-enabled processors are designed to optimize the performance of Windows applications that support the technology. Already a number of applications from Microsoft and other compa-

nies like Adobe utilize the performance increase. If MMX-enabled processors continue to deliver such improved performance, and with the 300MHz Pentium MMX processor being only \$41 more expensive than the regular 200MHz Pentium, you can expect to it to catch on very well. Already, most major American PC suppliers offer MMX Pentium chips in their main PC ranges. In a month or two, you'll see Jordanian dealers announcing MMX-enabled processors. When that happens, let's hope that Arabic Windows applica-

tions will be optimized to utilize the performance increase.

Arabia's Bookstore

Arabia.On.Line (AROL) has announced the first Internet bookstore for Arab users, allowing them to order their favourite books electronically.

Although there are a number of Internet bookstores already available, AROL's service offers books related to the Arab World, and written by Arab authors. To check out this Arab bookstore, log into address: www.arabia.com.

Microsoft's Internet Arabic Explorer 3.01 arrives, offered free

MICROSOFT HAS announced its long-awaited version of Internet Explorer with Arabic Support. It is available for Windows 95 and it is offered absolutely free!

For more information, contact Specialized Technical Services (STS), the Microsoft authorized distributor in Jordan, on telephone 827611. ■

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Too many years of answering the Bell take toll on Leonard

By Jennifer Frey

ATLANTIC CITY—Sugar Ray Leonard retired for the fifth time Saturday night, after Hector "Macho" Camacho pummeled him so badly in the fifth round of their fight at the Atlantic City Convention Center that the referee had to put a stop to it. Le's hope Leonard means it this time.

When Leonard walked into the ring shortly before midnight — to a crowd response that was

favorable, but could hardly be called electric—there surely were people who looked at his trim, seemingly well-toned body and had flashbacks to the great fights he had against the likes of Thomas Hearns and Marvin Hagler and Wilfred Benitez.

Others didn't. Others were thinking about Leonard's previous fight, the one against Terry Norris in February 1991. That fight, which represented Leonard's fourth comeback

attempt, was pitiful, pathetic, horrible for any Leonard fan—in the ring Saturday night. After that performance, it was hard to imagine Leonard ever stepping into the ring again. And his decision to do so—at age 40, after six years of inactivity—was both sad and disturbing.

So, too, was his performance in the ring Saturday night. Boxing with what he said later was a torn right calf muscle so debilitating that his doctors encour-

aged him not to fight, and boxing without any of his old aggression, Ray got knocked down in the first round and again in the fifth, shortly before referee Joe Cortez called a halt to the fight. Leonard was off balance, tentative and awkward in the ring.

And the end was downright ugly. As Camacho pinned him against the ropes and battered him with a series of punches, Leonard almost seemed in danger of getting seriously hurt. Ringside, in the first row of seats, Leonard's second wife, Bernadette, threw her right arm in front of her face, as if she were trying to ward off the blows herself.

"No Sugar, No Sugar," Bernadette wailed, her eyes still glued to her husband, despite her obvious desire not to watch. Somebody should have said those words—"No Sugar"—long before Saturday night. There are few things in sport sadder than watching a once-great champion lose to a man who never will be even remotely close to his equal. Leonard has a good life, a beautiful family, and—according to his own insistence—no financial problems that would have necessitated a comeback. Still, he couldn't stay away.

"As usual, I live on the edge. I try to defy the odds," Leonard said. "I once again tried to show defiance by coming back at the tender age of 40 — although 40 is not an old man."

But Leonard looked like an old man—not when he weighed in early in the morning, his body sleek and toned at 159 pounds, but when he actually stepped into the ring to face Camacho. Aggravated when he arrived at the postmatch news conference, a cut above his left eye taped shut, his face lined with exhaustion, he had to be helped to the lectern.

"This is indeed my last fight," Leonard said. "One thing about me—it doesn't take a scientist to understand if you're stopped in a fight, that's indicative of retirement."

The Norris fight was indicative of retirement, too, but Leonard did not seem to learn his lesson that time. He talked at length this past week about why

he had decided to make a comeback after so long—why, he wanted to fight now that he is a grandfather, years and years removed from the last of his six championships. He talked about his drive, about his desire, about his inability to walk away from a sport that made him feel so very, well, alive. And he really did sound like he meant all of it. But the much-maligned Camacho had just as wise an answer to that question.

"Right now, he's earning three, four million," Camacho said. "Nobody in this room, including me, could earn that much money in a day. So if he can pick up that much money—why not get your butt kicked?"

Speaking of money, one reporter at the postmatch news conference interrupted a long Leonard love-fest by asking a rather pointed question. After listening to Leonard, his doctor and his trainer all talk about the poor state of Leonard's right calf—Leonard said he had to visit the hospital for the problem two weeks ago—the reporter asked Leonard how he could justify charging fight fans \$35 a ticket when he knew, going in, that he was "damaged goods."

Although some of Leonard's fans in the room hissed, it was a more than reasonable query. "I gave 100 percent," Leonard said. "I gave more than most people give when they are in shape. I don't feel bad. I gave it all I had."

But all Leonard has is not enough anymore, not even with the healthiest calf in America. He made that painfully obvious Saturday night, when he followed up the Norris debacle with yet another disaster.

Hopefully, this time, Leonard really will get the message. He sounded convinced on Saturday, especially when he said this: "Always trying to come back and beat the odds is one thing. But there comes a point in everyone's life that you just have to accept that you don't have it."

Leonard had a hard time accepting that in the past. If he's smart, though, Camacho has taught him his last lesson. ■

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